Sunday, July 14, 199

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily [illegible] by the Jordan Press Foundation

جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بـ[illegible] عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الرأي»

Volume 21 Number 6273 AMMAN MONDAY, JULY 15, 1996, SAFAR 29, 1417 Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Netanyahu announces new arms deals

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu returned to Israel Sunday, armed with fresh military aid from Washington and pronouncing his week-long visit to the United States a success. Mr. Netanyahu told reporters on his arrival at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport late Sunday that Washington had agreed to assist Israel with two new rocket defense systems. "We have reached an agreement to develop and put in place in Israel a preventive alarm system against ballistic missiles as well as to continue the development of a joint project on laser-guided Nautilus missiles to intercept Katyusha rockets," the Israeli prime minister said. Israel has no reliable means of intercepting the rocket. Mr. Netanyahu also announced that an Israeli-U.S. working group on anti-terrorism measures would meet at the end of this month.

Zeroual to resume dialogue with opposition

PARIS (R) — Algerian President Liamine Zeroual will meet on Monday opposition leaders for talks on his proposed plans to end Algeria's four-year-old civil strife which has claimed more than 50,000 lives. But leaders of the country's Islamist rebels waging a war against the government are again excluded from the talks, the second round of dialogue between Mr. Zeroual and most of his political opponents this year. Mr. Zeroual has invited leaders of 12 political parties, including two legal Islamist groups, and heads of the main trade unions and national associations for the talks. Liberte newspaper reported on Sunday that Mr. Zeroual was considering forming a government of national unity in which a host of opponents would get ministerial portfolios.

Arab foreign ministers urge pressure on Israel

MUSCAT (R) — Six Gulf Arab states, Egypt and Syria on Sunday called on world powers to put pressure on Israel to abide by the principles of the five-year-old Middle East peace process.

The foreign ministers of the eight Gulf war Arab allies called on several world states and the co-sponsors of the peace process to "secure Israel's adherence to the basis and principles upon which the peace process and international decisions are based."

Their joint call to co-sponsors Washington and Moscow and other world powers was made in a communique following a two-day meeting in Oman by the eight Damascus Declaration states. They stressed that peace with Israel must be based on a land-for-peace formula and United Nations resolutions.

Egypt, Syria and the six Gulf Arab states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman — formed the Arab backbone of the U.S.-led alliance that drove Iraq out of Kuwait in February 1991. Days later they set up their Damascus Declaration alliance.

Egypt is the only member to have signed a peace treaty with Israel. Peace talks between Syria and Israel have foundered over the fate of the Golan Heights captured by Israel in 1967.

Gulf Arab states have said normalising ties with Israel could not take place before comprehensive peace is achieved with final agreements with all Arab neighbours.

Qatar and Oman exchanged trade offices with Israel prior to the election of hardline Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu in May and received Israel's former dovish Premier Shimon Peres.

But Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassim Ben Jabr Al Thani said in Muscat on Saturday his country "would review its stand on the peace process in light of the Israeli position and take steps that would guarantee Arab rights."

The ministers expressed "grave concern" over Mr. Netanyahu's recent statements in Washington, where he reiterated his opposition to the land-for-peace concept, insisted on Jerusalem as a unified capital for Israel and refused the setting up of a Palestinian state — all firm Arab demands.

Security was also high on the agenda of the Muscat meetings after a bomb in June killed 19 U.S. servicemen in eastern Saudi Arabia, the second attack against U.S. interests in the kingdom since November.

The ministers "stressed their condemnation of the terrorist explosion" and called for "coordinated international efforts to stop violence and terrorist acts and guarantees that those responsible be brought to justice."

They also urged steps to prevent terrorist groups from using countries as bases or as sources of funding and arms and called on Iran to stop "interfering" in the internal affairs of regional states.

Bahrain accused the region's non-Arab power Iran in June of backing a plot to overthrow its government. Iran denied the charge and Syria, Iran's main ally in the Arab World, is mediating between the two states.

The statement also called on Iran to end what it called its "occupation" of three Gulf islands claimed by the UAE.

In addition, the eight Arab governments urged Iraq on Sunday to comply with United Nations resolutions linked to its 1990 invasion of Kuwait and to refrain from further threatening its neighbour.

"Iraq is called on to totally comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions, linked to its invasion of Kuwait... and to completely cooperate with the U.N. Special Commission on Disarming Iraq (UNSCOM)," a statement here said.



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (right) and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat attend a graduation ceremony at an air base near Cairo Sunday (Reuters photo)

Arafat and Mubarak meet

BILBEIS, Egypt (AFP) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat told Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak on Sunday that he was keeping his cool despite hardline statements on the peace process by Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu. Mr. Arafat made a brief visit to an air force academy near Bilbeis, 70 kilometres north-east of Cairo to meet Mr. Mubarak and view a graduation ceremony of Egyptian pilots. An AFP correspondent heard Mr. Mubarak ask Mr. Arafat about the latest news as the two went into their private session, to which the Palestinian president responded with the Arab expression, "We're holding our nerves tight. We've got our nerves on ice." Mr. Mubarak responded, "We don't want to say anything now until he comes to Egypt and we see what he has to say," referring to Mr. Netanyahu.

Saudi minister to visit Yemen

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz is to visit Yemen shortly as part of a bid to normalise relations between the two countries, Saudi press reports said Sunday. The minister said he had informed the Sanaa authorities that he was willing to visit in late August or early September to try to kickstart the stuttering normalisation process. The minister admitted on Thursday that ongoing normalisation talks at joint-committee le-vel were making slow progress. Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh called last Sunday for a summit between the two countries to boost the slow-paced discussions and "eliminate obstacles." Saudi Arabia and Yemen last year set up committees to normalise ties when they signed a declaration of principles aimed at resolving a dec-ades-old border dispute. In February 1995, the neighbours signed a declaration of principles in which Sanaa gave up its claim to the border provinces of Najran, Assir and Jizane, which Saudi Arabia acquired in 1934.

Turkish troops kill 22 Kurdish rebels

DIYARBAKIR (AP) — Turkish troops killed 22 Kurdish rebels in clashes in the southeast Sunday, the regional governor's office said. Clashes took place in Hakkari, Van and Agri provinces along the Iranian border, and in eastern Tunceli, the report said. There was no report of troop casualties. Iran has claimed that Turkish jets have occasionally bombed Iranian territory, a claim strongly rejected by Turkish authorities. However, Turkish papers reported Sunday that Turkish jet fighters bombing a Kurdish guerrilla camp 50 kilometres inside the Iraqi border last week hit an Iranian border post by mistake, killing 20 Iranian soldiers. Iranian troops shelled a Turkish border post in return, killing four soldiers, the daily Sabah reported. Military officials were not immediately available for comment.

11-year-old girl dies after circumcision

CAIRO (AP) — An 11-year-old girl bled to death after a botched circumcision performed by a village barber, police officials said Sunday. The officials said the child, whose name was given only as Sara, died Friday in a Cairo hospital after doctors were unable to stem heavy bleeding. The girl's clitoris had been removed by a barber in a village in the Nile delta the day before, when a number of girls were circumcised in a special reed hut set up in a village celebration, they said. The police officials, who spoke on condition their names not be used, said an investigation of the death has been launched. The government has sought to end female circumcision, or genital mutilation, which ranges from clipping the tip of a young girl's clitoris to cutting away even the outer sexual organs. It has refused to ban the practice outright.

20 killed at riots against Qadhafi

CAIRO (Agencies) — At least 20 people were killed in a riot at a football match in the Libyan capital Tripoli during which bodyguards for sons of leader Muammar Qadhafi opened fire on spectators chanting anti-Qadhafi slogans, diplomats said.

Spectators fired back and there was a stampede, one diplomat said, adding that he had received reports of up to 50 dead at the match last Tuesday between two local teams.

He said the bodyguards had shot at the shouting spectators. People were killed and wounded in the crossfire and as the crowds stampeded out of the stadium.

"This is serious trouble by Tripoli standards," he said. A Libyan opposition source said he had reports that about 20 people died.

Some angry fans ran onto the pitch and stabbed the referee, another diplomat added.

Rioters spilled into the streets, stoning cars belonging to foreigners, harassing passers-by and chanting more slogans. At least two car windows were smashed, diplomats said. The city was quiet the following day.

"I think it is a mixture of football hooliganism and political violence which raised the temperatur ...The violence took a xenophobic turn," one said.

Libya's state-run radio and television reported "riots" at a football match that claimed the lives of a number of people.

They did not give any details on casualties but said Sunday was officially declared a day of mourning in the Tripoli region.

The two Tripoli clubs involved — Al-Itihad and Al-Ahly — were disbanded, they said.

Television broadcasts would only be shown in black and white and all parties in hotels and restaurants were cancelled as a sign of respect for the dead, state media said.

Tripoli has been relatively free of violent opposition to Col. Qadhafi's 27-year-old rule although northeast Libya has in recent months become a hotbed of Muslim militant activity with incidents erupting in or around the port of Benghazi.

"There are more and more reports of opposition reaching our ears recently. There are definitely rumblings," a diplomat said.

Last week travellers arriving in Egypt reported that at least five people were killed in the coastal town after police clashed with Muslim militants.

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Settlers plan expansion, PLO warns of catastrophe

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Jewish settlers said on Sunday they planned to triple their numbers under hardline Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, an intention decried by Palestinians as a catastrophe in the making. Settler leaders in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip said their plans included creation of new settlements though the focus would be on expanding existing communities.

"There must in my estimation be an addition — I am not sure whether we will finish this in four years — of from 300,000 to 500,000 Jewish residents," settler leader Pinhas Wallerstein told Israel Radio.

Hasan Asfour, director of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's peace negotiating office, told Reuters:

"I do not think the Palestinian people will stand handcuffed before this settlement assault...The Palestinian people will defend strongly their land and will not allow a small group of arrogant people to destroy their ambitions or national goals."

Asked what could be done to stop the looming settler steamroller, Mr. Asfour said the world community had a stake in preventing expansion.

"The case is not only the Palestinian case. The world community shoulders responsibility. I don't think anybody has an interest to push things forward towards a catastrophe," he said.

Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party backs Jewish settlement, but since taking office last month he has yet to adopt a plan for the West Bank and Gaza, parts of which Israel's last government handed over to Palestinian rule under peace deals.

Binyamin Ben Eliezer, who was housing minister in the ousted Labour-led government, said adding 300,000 Jewish settlers would mean "wiping out the political process" with the Palestinians.

About 130,000 Israelis live in settlements scattered over the West Bank and Gaza Strip captured by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war and home to about two million Palestinians.

Settler leader Zeev Hever said they had plans for new settlements — the radio said eight to 10 — but the programme they expected to present to the new government was largely for expanding existing settlements.

"The programme is based mainly on massive expansion of the existing settlements," Mr. Hever told the radio.

Labour's Yitzhak Rabin froze all new settlements but allowed the expansion of settlements especially around East Jerusalem, which Palestinians want for a future capital.

Shimon Peres, who took over after a rightist Jew assassinated Mr. Rabin last November, stuck to the policy.

Israel declares all of Jerusalem its "eternal capital."

In Washington last week Mr. Netanyahu left the door open to building new settlements, a position the United States opposes.

"This is obviously something we don't preclude but the precise pattern, the decision of how, when, where, is something that I will deliberate with my colleagues," Mr. Netanyahu said at the White House with U.S. President Bill Clinton at his side.

Mr. Ben Eliezer said Mr. Netanyahu would have to begin acting on returning from his U.S. trip on Sunday.

"I imagine he will have to go and deal with the basic question — yes, there will be a continuation of the political process, or there is no continuation of the political process," Mr. Ben-Eliezer, now a member of parliament, told the radio.

Meanwhile, Mr. Netanyahu is to pass on to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat this week a step-by-step plan for the relaunch of peace negotiations, the daily Haaretz reported on Sunday.

A government representative is to meet Mr. Arafat in coming days to give him Mr. Netanyahu's programme, which sets out conditions that the Palestinians must meet for each stage of talks to go ahead, Haaretz said.

The right-wing Israeli leader showed the programme to Mr. Clinton when they met at the White House on Tuesday.

He also asked Washington to spell out to Mr. Arafat exactly what he must do in order to guarantee progress in the peace process, the

(Continued on page 7)

Sharon holds talks with Egyptian ambassador

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's new Minister of National Infrastructure Ariel Sharon met Sunday with the Egyptian ambassador to Israel in his first talks with an Arab envoy since his appointment last week, his spokesman said.

The hardline former general had invited the ambassador, Mohammad Bassiouny, to his office to discuss common infrastructural projects between the two countries as well as "political questions," the spokesman said, without elaborating.

Mr. Sharon, an outspoken opponent of Palestinian self-rule was appointed head of the newly-created super-ministry by Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, who is to visit Egypt on Thursday, his first visit to an Arab country since his May 29 election.

"We will welcome him and we will tell him what is possible and what is not," the Egyptian ambassador told Israel's army radio.

Rights group: Closure of Palestinian lands violates international law

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel is imposing collective punishment on the Palestinians and violating international law by sealing off the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the international organisation Human Rights Watch said Sunday.

The Washington-based group said in a report that the four-month-old closure "goes beyond the legitimate security steps permissible under international law."

It cited notably the 1949 IV Geneva Convention protecting the rights of occupied people.

"Israel must reconcile its security needs with the rights and welfare of the Palestinian population, and stop subjecting the entire population of the occupied territories to collective punishment and suffering for the crimes of a few," the Human Rights Watch/ Middle East report said.

Israel completely sealed off the Palestinian territories in February at the start of a wave of Islamic militant suicide bombings in the Jewish state.

It has slightly eased the blockade since the May 29 election of right-wing Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu, but most Palestinians are still not allowed to travel to Israel and annexed East Jerusalem, or cross between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Although several members of the new government have proposed easing or lifting the closure, no policy exists to ensure that, in the event of a future reimposition, relief would be provided to offset the harm to the Palestinian population," Human Rights Watch said.

It said the closure hampered food supplies and medical care for the Palestinians.

Qatar's emir in Saudi Arabia to settle dispute with Bahrain

DOHA (AFP) — The emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, headed to Saudi Arabia on Sunday to discuss Riyadh's efforts at mediating Qatar's territorial dispute with Bahrain over islands in the Gulf, an official said.

The emir is accompanied by a large delegation, including his foreign minister, Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Al Thani, and Economy Minister Mohamed Ben Khalifa Al Thani.

The emir is to meet with Saudi's King Fahd in the western city of Jeddah and examine "ways to push forward Saudi mediation" in Qatar's long-standing dispute with Bahrain, the official said.

The conflict centres on whether Qatar or Bahrain has sovereignty over the Hawar Islands and Facht Al Dibel rocks lying in the Gulf between the two countries.

The dispute almost degenerated into armed conflict in 1986, but King Fahd stepped in to contain the crisis. Qatar said Thursday it would withdraw its international lawsuit against Bahrain over disputed islands if Saudi mediation efforts are successful.

"If we reach a brotherly settlement, we will withdraw our case from the International Court of Justice (ICJ)" at the Hague, Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Al Thani told the official QNA news agency.

"What problem is there in seeking a solution (under Saudi auspices) while pursuing our case at the International Court of Justice?" Sheikh Hamad asked. But he warned Bahrain against "foot-dragging" if Qatar withdraws its case.

After accusing Bahrain of "continuously provoking" Qatar, the foreign minister said his recent trip to Manama was not to consider withdrawing Doha's case but rather to "start improving bilateral ties."

"The improvement of relations between Manama and Doha does not at all mean the withdrawal of Doha's case, although it could happen at a later stage when all obstacles to improved ties are removed," Sheikh Hamad said.

Manama and Doha have until Sept. 30 to submit their written documents to the court, the ICJ said. Bahrain challenged the tribunal's competence to rule in the case, saying Qatar had no right to file a lawsuit unilaterally under Saudi-mediated agreements signed in 1987 and 1990 by the two countries.

Ultra-orthodox lawmaker threatens Netanyahu's government over road



Israeli border police detain an ultra-religious Jew for trying to break through police lines Saturday (Reuters photo)

TEL AVIV (AP) — Wielding their new political clout, ultra-orthodox legislators took the battle over Sabbath observance to parliament on Sunday, with one lawmaker threatening to topple the government.

But Avraham Ravitz, leader of the United Torah Judaism Party, agreed to postpone his no-confidence motion after a minister promised to investigate charges that police had used excessive force to disperse ultra-orthodox demonstrators.

About 5,000 demonstrators hurled garbage and stones at motorists and police on Saturday to protest their violating the Jewish Sabbath. Police fired water cannons and clubbed protesters to keep them from blocking the street.

The demonstrators were protesting a supreme court injunction that postponed the closing of Bar Ilan Street, a major city road that passes through a religious neighbourhood.

The street has become the symbol of the increasingly bitter battle between religious and secular Israelis in Jerusalem. Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu won the overwhelming support of religious Jews in his May 29 election victory, and his majority in parliament depends on the support of religious parties.

Mr. Ravitz charged Sunday that police had beaten women and children and broken into homes.

"This incident was a pogrom," Mr. Ravitz said on Israel television, using the term for violent street riots against Jews in Russia. "Police entered into the homes of people who did not do a thing and beat a woman, a child and an old man. I have witnesses."

Jerusalem police chief Aryeh Amit, who was at the demonstration site Saturday, said his men had acted appropriately in dispersing a violent demonstration.

"The police officers were confronted with a very difficult riot," he told Israel television. "Hundreds of stones and bottles were thrown at us. ... The policemen did excellent work."

Mr. Amit said one officer was hit in the genitals with a cement block. As other officers dragged him from the scene, he was struck in the head by a stone.

Mr. Amit said demonstrators shouted profanities at him and his men. Leaders of the ultra-orthodox community apologised to him Sunday, he said.

Mr. Ravitz had said he would recommend that his party bring a no confidence vote against the government if Mr. Amit was not replaced.

But after meeting with public security minister Avigdor Kahalani, Mr. Ravitz said he would hold off until Mr. Kahalani could investigate the matter."

"Minister Kahalani agreed with me in principle that he is against collective punishment," Mr. Ravitz told the Associated Press.

"So I postponed my no-confidence vote."

Transportation Minister Yitzhak Levy, of the National Religious Party, reignited the religious-secular conflict last week by ordering the road shut during Sabbath prayer times — about 10 hours between sundown Friday and dusk Saturday.

On Friday, the supreme court issued a temporary injunction against the closing.

Shlomi Benizri, a lawmaker from the ultra-orthodox Shas Party, said his party would demand that Mr. Netanyahu pass a law to override the supreme court decision.

Mr. Benizri's Shas and Mr. Ravitz's United Torah Judaism parties hold 14 seats in Mr. Netanyahu's coalition government, which has 66 seats in the 120-member parliament. If they voted together they could bring down the government.

Movies, music banned in Afghanistan

KABUL (AP) — Afghanistan's new prime minister closed the movie houses and banned music from television and radio on Sunday saying both were repugnant to Islam.

When he was sworn in as Afghanistan's new prime minster last month Gulbuddin Hekmatyar vowed to run a strict Islamic government and turn the capital into a devout town.

"We gave more than 1.5 million sacrifices for the implementation of an Islamic government," said Information and Culture Minister Qyanuddin Kashal, referring to the number of people who were believed killed during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

The communist regime was thrown out of Kabul in 1992. During communist rule Kabul was relatively liberal. Women wore skirts, alcohol was served in local hotels and theatres and music stores did a thriving business.

The first Islamic rulers that followed the fall of communism in Kabul tried to impose a strict Islamic government, closing movie theatres, banning music, destroying mountains of alcohol, banishing women to the homes and insisting they wear veils in public.

But within months the regime relaxed its control. Movie theatres reopened and women, although they wore traditional scarves, returned to the offices and streets.

"This is the repeat of an unsuccessful experiment," said Abdul Hafeez Mansour, chairman of the state-run Bakhtiar News Agency. "We tried to close everything four years ago and we failed. People don't want this."

Mr. Hekmatyar has issued several harsh Islamic edicts since taking office last June 26. While he has not banished women to their homes, he has ordered them to wear veils.

Although they are allowed to work they are not allowed to work alongside men.

Mr. Hekmatyar, who for four years tried to take Kabul by force, only joined the government in May after signing a peace pact with his archrival President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Some of the most ferocious fighting seen in the capital was carried out by Mr. Hekmatyar's troops who rained thousands of rockets on Kabul destroying entire neighbourhoods and killing more than 25,000 people — all of them civilians.

Tens of thousands of people fled the capital and still are living as refugees elsewhere in the country.

Despite Mr. Hekmatyar's attempts to bring strict Islamic behaviour to Kabul, there are still some who say its not enough.

The Taliban militia, an army of ex-religious students turned guerrilla fighters, wants both Mr. Hekmatyar and Mr. Rabbani to be put on trial as war criminals and the capital handed over to them.

They rocket Kabul almost daily. On the day Mr. Hekmatyar took his oath of office the Taliban launched a day-long rocket barrage that killed at least 65 people and injured hundreds more.

Meanwhile the owners of the movie theatres are trying to lobby the government for a change of heart.

Ishmael Nawabi, the owner of Park Cinema in Kabul, criticised the closures.

"This cinema is not un-Islamic. It is a recreation area for people," he said through an interpreter.

He said his movies passed a censor board before being shown. He also offered to show movies made in any Islamic country.

"If they send us movies made in Iran or any Islamic country, we'll show them," he said.

U.S. envoy starts Cyprus mission

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Presidential envoy Richard Beattie will head to Athens, Nicosia and Ankara Monday for a four-day visit aimed at finding a solution to the 22-year division of Cyprus.

U.S. President Bill Clinton's special envoy to Cyprus will be travelling with the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright.

The White House has said the mission would focus on security issues.

A U.S. official who asked not to be named told AFP the mission would be "exploratory" and that Mr. Beattie "is not going to come back with solutions."

Mr. Beattie and Ms. Albright are due to be in Athens Tuesday and Wednesday, will arrive late Wednesday to Nicosia and will be in Turkey Thursday and Friday.

Mr. Clinton had announced the visit on June 17, when the president of Cyprus, Glafcos Clerides, visited Washington. Mr. Clinton said at the time Mr. Beattie would visit the region to "explore further actions that the United States can take." The island has been divided between the Greek and Turkish communities since 1974 when Turkey sent troops to the island's north following a Greek Cypriot coup in Nicosia inspired by the junta then ruling in Athens.

Muslim clerics oppose Palestinian weddings for Jews

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Muslim clerics said Sunday they were fiercely opposed to the idea of organising civilian weddings for Israeli Jews in the Palestinian self-rule territories, despite the approval of the Palestinian National Authority.

"We are not getting involved in these marriages," said the mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Ikrimeh Sabri, rejecting a proposal to open a marriage bureau in the West Bank town of Jericho for secular Jews who want to avoid the obligatory religious wedding in Israel.

"Islam has given the followers of other religions freedom in their religious and family affairs, so we don't get involved in their marriages," said the mufti, whose declaration was published in several Palestinian newspapers.

At the moment, secular Jews who want a civilian marriage have to travel abroad to get married. Many go to the Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

Israeli businessmen suggested to Palestinian Justice Minister Freih Abu Meddein two weeks ago that the self-rule authority step into the breach to provide a service closer to home.

Mr. Abu Meddein gave his backing in principle to the idea, which would earn the Palestinian authority an estimated $3 million a year.

Israel's interior ministry only recognises marriages in Israel that are carried out by an orthodox rabbi. But it must also under international law recognise civilian marriages contracted in a foreign country.

A couple forced to go abroad can spend an average of $1,200 on their travel and wedding costs. Marriages in Jericho would save them a lot of money, the Israeli businessmen argue.

However, the head of waqfs (Islamic property) in Jericho called a press conference at the weekend to voice his opposition to the plan.

Sheikh Ismail Jamal said he was surprised to see the Palestinian authority agreeing to organise civilian marriages "while Israel bans them."

Muslim clerics fear a marriage bureau for secular Jews would give secular Palestinians the idea of avoiding their own religious courts when they get married.

"Any Muslim marriage not registered by a Muslim court is licenced prostitution," Sheikh Jamal thundered.

For Israelis, a marriage in Jericho could also create problems. Under Israeli law a civilian marriage is only recognised if it takes place in a sovereign state. The Palestinian territories do not have that status, and never will have according to new Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu.

Palestinian couple wed at Israeli checkpoint

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A Palestinian bridegroom stopped by an Israeli army roadblock from getting to his bride in Jerusalem gamely held his wedding ceremony at the checkpoint in front of baffled soldiers.

Adnan Dukhan, from Balata refugee camp in Nablus on the West Bank, was refused a one-day permit by Israeli military authorities to go to Jerusalem to fetch his bride, Rania Assila, Palestinian newspapers reported.

But he turned up anyway at the Ram checkpoint north of Jerusalem in the hope that soldiers would soften and let his wedding cortege through.

When they refused, Mr. Dukhan, his family and guests waited at the checkpoint for the bride's cortege to come to them. They then held their ceremony and escorted the bride to her new home in Nablus.

Under Palestinian custom, the bridegroom's family, accompanied by musicians go to the bride's home to escort her back with them.

The Israeli authorities sealed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip in February at the start of a wave of militant suicide bombings in Israel.

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18:00 Magazine — Thalassa
19:00 News in French
19:15 ...Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Doc. — Milner Fenwick
20:00 Paul McKenna Show
20:30 Mat Lok
21:10 100 Years of Capitalism in Korea
22:00 News in English
22:25 The Bold and the Beautiful
23:10 Mancuso FBI

PRAYER TIMES

04:03 Fajr
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WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
Moderate summer weather condition will prevail with temperatures above average and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 18/31
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Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 30, Aqaba 36 Humidity readings: Amman 43 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.

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Abdali Tel. Repairs..... 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
J. Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Co.....636381
RJ Flight Information ..08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITAL

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381/32
Khalidi Maternity..... 644281/6
Akileh Maternity.....642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity ...642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Bashir.....775111/26
Queen Alia Hospital ...602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital.... (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.
Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:15 Sanaa (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:30 Jeddah (RJ)
10:10 ..Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:20 Beirut (RJ)
10:55 New Delhi (RJ)
15:00 London (RJ)
17:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:00 Bangkok (RJ)
23:25 Casablanca (RJ)
04:10 ...Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights
11:45 Khartoum (SD)
13:40 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:30 Kiev (6U)
15:00 Vienna (OS)
18:30 Athens, Istanbul (Q7)
20:35 Cairo (MS)
20:55 Paris, Damascus (AF)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
22:00 Tel Aviv (LY)
23:30 Athens, Beirut (OA)
1:20 Amsterdam (KL)
05:40 London (BA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:50 Aqaba (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:35 Beirut (RJ)
06:30 Jeddah (RJ)
11:00 Casablanca (RJ)
11:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
13:15 Cairo (RJ)
13:25 London (RJ)
13:25 Frankfurt (RJ)
21:45 Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:45 Damascus (RJ)
22:15 Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:30 Al 'Ain, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
23:45 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights
06:00 Istanbul (TK)
07:45 Beirut, London (BA)
08:45 Beirut (ME)
13:00 Khartoum (SD)
14:30 Bahrain (GF)
15:30 Kiev (6U)
15:50 Vienna (OS)
19:30 Doha (Q7)
21:25 Cairo (MS)
23:00 Tel Aviv (LY)
23:55 Damascus, Paris (AF)
02:30 Amsterdam (KL)
04:00 Beirut, Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
20:30 Aqaba (RW)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apricot	800/500
Apple	700/500
Banana	600/600
Banana (mukhammar)	520/520
Banana (imported)	830/600
Cabbage	220/140
Carrot	120/80
Cauliflower	230/130
Cucumber (large)	140/80
Cucumber (small)	240/140
Eggplant	190/120
Garlic	650/400
Lemon	650/400
Marrow (large)	220/140
Marrow (small)	360/250
Mulukhiah	130/80
Onion (dry)	130/80
Okra	700/500
Orange	400/300
Plumb	350/200
Pea	340/280
Peach	670/400
Pepper (hot)	340/240
Pepper (sweet)	320/200
Potato	300/200
String Bean	340/240
Sweet melon	110/70
Tomato	110/70
Water melon	100/70

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR



Her Majesty Queen Noor, Greco-Roman city of Jerash of Culture and Arts (Petra p

Queen, pan final check

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Higher National Committee (HNC) for the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts Sunday made their final inspection of the festival site, a Royal Court statement said.

During the visit, Her Majesty Queen Noor, chair of the HNC, expressed her great satisfaction with the large number of Arab individuals and groups participating in this year's festival thus putting an Arab imprint on what has become an internationally-recognised annual event, the statement said. The group performers in this category will come from the Gulf countries, the Levant and North Africa.

Committee members stressed the importance of providing visitors with all the necessary services, including organised and unrestricted entrances and exits as well as clean and comfortable areas for rest

JPA secures r

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A weekly tabloid editor who was detained Thursday on charges of slander and lack of accuracy in reporting, was released on bail Sunday morning, according to President of the Jordan Press Association (JPA) Seif Sharif.

Mr. Sharif said the JPA contacted Attorney General Fuad Suleiman to appeal for the release of Na'el Salah, editor of the weekly Al Haqika (the Truth).

"Mr. Suleiman was sympathetic to our case and agreed to release Mr. Salah on bail," Mr. Sharif told the Jordan Times, adding that this was the first time the association intervened with "higher judicial authorities" to discharge a journalist from detention.

Mr. Salah, editor of the four-month old tabloid was detained in his office after the director of the Customs Department, Nazmi Abdullat, filed a complaint accusing the weekly of publishing a news item accusing Mr. Abdullat and the

WHAT'S

FIL

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LECTU

"Economic Intellect in Arab Jordan" (Arabic) by Dr. Jawad Centre at 6:30 p.m.

"Report on Conservation by Ali Jaberi at the Friends of (06-686382).

EXHIBIT

"Abstract (plastic) art Nuwaileh entitled "Peace in Royal Cultural Centre. Alab heritage by Yibla Charitable

Exhibition of works by Sh titled "The Time of Silence" Ash. Also displaying works until July 31.



Her Majesty Queen Noor, accompanied by several officials, on Sunday tours the Greco-Roman city of Jerash to get reassured on preparations for the Jerash Festival of Culture and Arts (Petra photo)

Queen, panel members make final check on Jerash Festival site

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Committee members stressed the importance of providing visitors with all the necessary services, including organised and unrestricted entrances and exits as well as clean and comfortable areas for rest and refreshments, the statement said.

The Jerash Festival will celebrate its 15th anniversary this year with vibrant performances also by renowned international groups and artists such as the American Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, British Oddsocks Productions playing Richard III and Taiwanese, Bulgarian and German folklore groups.

Top Arab solo entertainers on the festival's programme include Lebanese singers Majda Rumi and Najwa Karam, Syrian singer Sabah Fakhri and Egyptian singer Mustafa Qamar.

For music fans, there will be special dinner-musicals, in cooperation with Romero Restaurant, by the Portuguese Chamber Orchestra and the famous Polish soprano Urszula Kryger, at Ajloun Castle and Umm Qais respectively.

The Festival's cultural events will also feature popular poetry evenings by prominent poets from throughout the Arab World at Jerash and Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation's Darat Al-Funun in Amman.

The members of the Higher National Committee are Her Majesty Queen Noor, HRH Princess Wijdan Ali, Senator Leila Sharaf, Advisor to the Queen In'am Mufti, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat, Minister of Culture Ahmad Qudah, Director of the Office of HRH Crown Prince Hassan Michel Hamarneh, Director of Jordan Radio and Television Ihsan Ramzi, President of Royal Jordanian Nader Dhababi, the Director of Morale Guidance and Jerash Festival Director Akram Masarweh, the statement said.

JPA secures release of editor on bail

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Mr. Salah, editor of the four-month old tabloid was detained in his office after the director of the Customs Department, Nazmi Abdullat, filed a complaint accusing the weekly of publishing a news item accusing Mr. Abdullat and the department's employees of involvement in bribery.

"I was released today (Sunday) after a second bail was submitted when learning of Mr. Sharif's intervention," Mr. Salah told the Jordan Times.

Charges pressed against Mr. Salah by Prosecutor General Jamal Zogby include overlooking objectivity, honesty and accuracy in reporting on news, publishing inaccurate news, slandering individuals, and tarnishing the reputation and dignity of public employees while performing their duties.

Mr. Salah pointed out Sunday that when he was questioned by the prosecutor general last week, he asked Mr. Zogby for more time to provide him with evidence to support his allegations in the published article "but he refused, and instead he transferred my case the same day to the Amman Court of First Instance."

On the other hand, Mr. Zogby had said in an earlier interview with the Jordan Times that when he questioned Mr. Salah, "the defendant failed to provide sources or evidence to support his allegations in the article."

According to Mr. Salah, the Judge Tawfiq Quessy set July 18 to start hearing his case. "I will present my sources and evidence to defend myself," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sharif said Sunday that the JPA received assurances from the attorney general to enforce and activate some of the existing association's articles protecting journalist's rights in courts.

One article, according to Mr. Sharif, stipulates that detention orders against journalists pressed by the prosecutor general should be done via the JPA.

Moreover, another article stipulates that a JPA member should be present during trials of journalists.

"We received promises from the attorney general that these two articles will be enforced in the near future," Mr. Sharif told the Jordan Times Sunday.

Algerian minister ends visit
Cooperation expected in health care

AMMAN (Petra) — Algerian Minister of Health Yahya Qaidoum Sunday wound up a five-day visit to Jordan by signing minutes with his Jordanian counterpart Aref Bataineh, in what he described as the first step towards promoting Jordanian-Algerian cooperation through a joint committee. The joint committee was formed during Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti's recent visit to Algeria.

The minutes deal with health care provision in the pharmaceutical industry

Dr. Qaidoum said he was impressed with the level of medical services and the pharmaceutical industry in Jordan, putting them on par with those of European countries. He said his country would certainly benefit from its cooperation with Jordan in these fields.

Dr Qaidoum said a high level Algerian delegation is due in Jordan shortly in order to glean expertise from Jordan's pharmaceutical industry and to exchange expertise in the training of nurses and midwives.

The Jordanian-Algerian cooperation will involve providing primary healthcare including combating infectious and endemic diseases. Jordan will also offer its healthcare facilities to Algerian patients.

Also the Jordanian Ministry of Health will offer 10 annual scholarships to Algerian doctors to train in the Kingdom's government-run hospitals.

Mr. Qaidoum left Amman for Algiers later on Sunday.

Canada, Jordan near accord on energy-saving projects

GENEVA(Petra)— Canada has tentatively agreed to partially finance two multi-million dollar projects on solar and wind power, and energy conservation of energy, in Jordan, according to Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Environment Abdul Razzak Tubeishat.

Dr. Tubeishat, who is currently attending an international meeting here on the changes in world climate, said he obtained the consent to finance the projects in talks with Canadian officials and experts taking part in the meeting.

He said the projects are essential to the development of rural and remote regions of the Kingdom and the protection of the environment.

The Canadians are sending a team of specialists to Jordan in September to finalise the meeting of financing and executing both projects which are designed to raise the standard of living of residents of these regions by providing electric power generated through solar and wind energy systems, according to the minister.

The solar and wind power project is estimated to cost $4.5 million and the energy conservation project will cost $3.8 million, said the minister. He added that Jordan was seeking further donors to fund the two schemes.

According to Dr Tubeishat, the energy conservation project aims to reduce energy use in commercial and residential buildings, to minimise waste, solve the problem of humidity inside buildings and thereby reduce maintenance costs.

Dr Tubeishat said these environment-friendly projects are part of Jordan's search for renewable sources of energy and reduction of its annual fuel consumption, which if left to continue at the present rate will reach 4.9 million tonnes by the end of the century .

Germany has provided Jordan with technical and financial assistance in conducting wind and solar power experiments in cooperation with the Royal Scientific Society and the Jordan Electricity Authority mainly in the remote desert region of Jurf Al Darawish and in the north of the country.

227 journalists write in support of original draft JPA law

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A total of 227 journalists have put their signatures to a letter addressed to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti supporting an original, controversial draft legislation governing the Jordan Press Association (JPA).

"We have written a letter to the Prime Minister to be given to him during a meeting that we requested, supporting (Minister of Information) Marwan Muasher's original draft of the new JPA law," said Fouad Abu Hijleh, a correspondent for Al Hayat Jadid, a Ramallah-based newspaper.

Mr. Abu Hijleh said that the 227 journalists included a "minority" of JPA members and several foreign correspondents and columnists, most of whom he says "are very well known at home and abroad."

The JPA draft legislation, approved by the cabinet earlier this spring caused a stir in the profession over clauses that would open membership to all practising journalists, including the editorial staff of Radio Jordan and Television Corporation.

If implemented in its original form, the draft law would also annul obligatory, but strictly controlled, membership to the 367-member syndicate.

Despite a clause in the current law which stipulates that practising journalists must belong to the association, journalists themselves estimate that as many as 100 working journalists do not belong because they either cannot meet the strict membership requirements despite lengthy careers in the profession, or they disagree in principle with the idea of obligatory membership.

The latter claim that obligatory membership is contrary to the International Declaration on Human Rights.

Non-JPA members are not legally recognised as journalists, and are regarded as practising their profession in contravention of the law.

A deal struck in June between the government and the previous JPA leadership maintained the mandatory membership clause, but would allow a six-month grace period for practising non-members to join, despite their inability to meet membership requirements.

Arguments in favour of mandatory membership are that such a clause allows journalists themselves to "clean up" the reputation of the profession in the Kingdom, and that "control" of the profession is also left to journalists.

A second camp contends that the profession should be controlled neither by the government, nor by an association.

"We believe that Dr. Marwan Muasher gave up the fight (for freedom of membership) because he didn't get support from people like us (signatories of the letter)," said Mr. Abu Hijleh.

The letter to the prime minister reads that "if membership is to be kept mandatory, measures should be taken to ensure that journalists, from either Jordanian or non-Jordanian media, are able to join at any time."

A six-member delegation from the group will meet Dr. Muasher next Wednesday, and has also requested an audience with the prime minister.

According to Shaker Johary, correspondent for a Qatari newspaper, the prime minister has agreed to meet with the delegation at a date yet to be determined.

Government sources could not confirm that Mr. Kabariti had agreed to a meeting.

The new law also suggests that a punitive committee be formed within the association that would rule on violations of the Press and Publications Law."Although we support Dr. Muasher's efforts," said Mr. Abu Hijleh, "we do not feel that he has the right to give this (punitive) ability to the association, which would mean that journalists would still face imprisonment."

"We also see that the old guard, which is dominating the association, supports this," he said. "We need a more civilised and democratic law with regards to this — no civil society sends journalists to prison."

Envoy in Baghdad says Iraq calls for increased trade

Amman (J.T.) — Jordanian Ambassador to Iraq Bassam Qaqish was quoted in a local Arabic daily Sunday as saying that the Iraqi government is calling for an increase of its trade relations with Jordan.

According to Al Dustour, the ambassador said that the Iraqi government's views were conveyed to a Jordanian industrial delegation which visited Baghdad last week.

Mr. Qaqish called on Jordanian industrialists and merchants to increase the number of meetings with their Iraqi counterparts in order to determine the needs of the Iraqi markets and provide Iraq with goods at competitive prices, the newspaper said.

It said the head of the Jordanian delegation to Baghdad, Khaldoun Abu Hassan, had said upon his return to Amman that he agreed with Iraqi officials to increase Jordanian-Iraqi trade.

According to Al Dustour, Mr. Abu Hassan, however, did not say whether the trade volume between the two countries will return to its previous $400 million annual level after being reduced to $200 million earlier this year .

In his statement to Al Dustour, Mr Qaqish said that he believes the trade protocol will remain confined to approximately $200 million, in accordance with the government's decision which was induced by Iraq's failure to pay its accumulating debts to Jordan.

Mr. Qaqish added that Jordan has already exported $200 million worth of goods to Iraq this year, the report said.

It said Mr. Qaqish quoted Iraqi officials saying that Jordanian goods will be given priority provided they have a competitive edge over others. Furthermore, he said, the officials said Iraq is still interested in importing its needs through the Aqaba port.

The Al Dustour article said Mr. Qaqish also noted that Jordanian businesses are currently facing strong competition from several countries seeking to sell goods to Iraq, especially since the U.N. has allowed Baghdad to import food and medicine from its $2 billion sale of oil every six months.

Following his return to Amman at the head of an 18- member delegation seeking new deals with Iraqi businessmen, Mr Abu Hassan said that the members of the delegation have signed contracts to supply food and medicine but gave no specific figures.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man arrested for stockpiling flour

AMMAN (J.T) — Ministry of Supply teams, in cooperation with the security forces Saturday arrested a citizen who has stockpiled 16 tonnes of wheat flour in a house allegedly to profit from the expected increase in wheat prices, according to Jordan TV. The ministry has recently launched a campaign to prevent the stockpiling of flour and any manipulation of its prices. A total of 12 ministry inspection teams have been formed to monitor the sale of flour in the Greater Amman area.

New bridge opens over Wadi Sheib

AMMAN (Petra) — Work on a JD 1.5 million bridge at Wadi Sheib area in Balqa Governorate has ended. Formal inauguration by Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul-Hadi Majali is planned for today, according to a ministry statement. The bridge took 550 days to build and is 108 metres long and 14 metres wide. The new bridge, the highest in Jordan at 26 metres in height, eliminates several dangerous curves on both sides of the wadi, the ministry said.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

* "La Nuit de Varennes" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURES

* "Economic Intellect in Arab Poetry With Concentration On Jordan" (Arabic) by Dr. Jawad Ahani at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:30 p.m.
* "Report on Conservation Issues for Aqaba's Palm Beach" by Ali Jaberi at the Friends of Archaeology at 6:30 p.m. (Tel. 696682).

EXHIBITIONS

* "Abstract (plastic) art by Samar Sabra and Nadia 'Awamleh entitled "Peace in the Eyes of the Youth" at the Royal Cultural Centre. Also displaying works on national heritage by Yibla Charitable Society, until July 18.
* Exhibition of works by Sudanese artist Rashid Diab entitled "The Time of Silence" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh. Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists, until July 31.

'No increase in undergraduate tuition'

AMMAN (J.T.)— Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour Sunday said the Ministry has no plans to increase tuition for undergraduate students enrolled at state universities.

In a telephone interview, Dr. Ensour told the Jordan Times that tuition for students studying towards their first university degree at the six state universities are symbolic, yet they will not be increased.

He said the budgets of the six universities altogether total JD 80 million, an amount which can barely enable them to provide the appropriate services and facilities for their students.

Asked to comment on a related news report published in Al Dustour Arabic daily, Dr. Ensour said tuition fees for post graduate students will be increased to cover part of the actual study costs, noting that students currently enrolled in the higher studies will not be affected by the new increase in fees.

Even with the new increase the annual cost will only be one-fourth of costs of study at a kindergarten, Dr. Ensour said.

Yarmouk University President Marwan Kamal said in an interview published in Al Dustour on Sunday, that the university has no intention of raising its tuition for undergraduates. However, he said, tuition for postgraduate studies will be increased, adding that it will not affect students already enrolled in the postgraduate studies programmes.

Dr Kamal said that raising the university fees is meant to increase the university resources and enable it to provide better educational services to its students, rather than to pay back debts.



Mandela attends Bastille Day parade

PARIS (R) — South African President Nelson Mandela, seated on a gilded armchair alongside President Jacques Chirac, watched France's military finest parade down the Champs-Elysees Avenue in the annual Bastille Day parade Sunday.

Mr. Mandela, 77, who forsook his trademark patterned silk shirts for a grey suit, was guest of honour at the colourful national day display, marked for the first time by the participation of Britain's Royal Air Force.

Four tornado fighter-bombers, three Harrier fighters and a VC10 refuelling plane flew over the Arc De Triomphe flanked by French Mirage jets, symbolising the Franco-British European Air Group, a command created two years ago to plan for peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

French Defence Minister Charles Millon said the British presence, two years after German troops from the Franco-German Eurocorps rode in the parade, showed that the creation of a European defence identity was under way.

Mr. Chirac greeted Mr. Mandela warmly on the reviewing stand on the Place De La Concorde, the square where King Louis XVI was executed in 1794, and star-struck French cabinet ministers shook the veteran anti-apartheid fighter's hand in awe.

Bastille Day, the French national holiday, marks the storming of a notorious prison that led to the French Revolution of 1789.

Among units Mr. Mandela saw marching down the tree-lined avenue under grey skies were elements of the Foreign Legion and paratroopers who have regularly intervened in conflicts in former French and Belgian colonies in Africa.

France has troops based in six African countries, as well as units serving with NATO in former Yugoslavia and with the United Nations in Haiti and southern Lebanon.

Mr. Mandela was in France after a triumphant state visit to Britain last week. Also on the reviewing stand was Britain's chief of air staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon, although no British political leader was invited.

Mr. Chirac, who earlier this year announced a revolutionary overhaul of the armed forces switching from conscription to an all-professional army by the year 2002, opened the parade by reviewing troops arrayed around the Arc De Triomphe and on the Champs-Elysees in an open-topped command car.

Defence Minister Charles Millon is due to announce the first base closures and dissolutions of regiments Wednesday, which with a long-overdue streamlining of bloated defence industries could cost tens of thousands of jobs in medium-sized provincial towns across France.

The newspaper Le Monde said the first phase would involve the dissolution of 38 regiments in the next three years, and the reduction of France's military presence in Germany from 20,000 to 3,000 men.

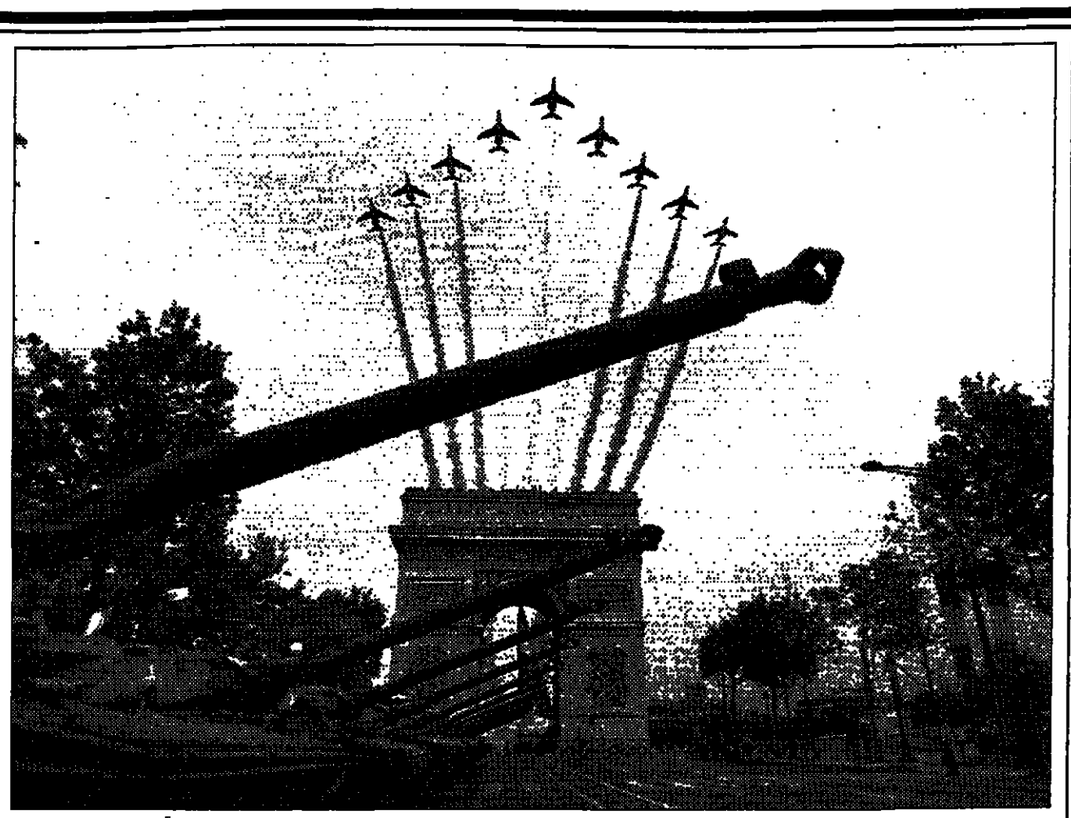
Mr. Millon said the inevitable closures would be accompanied by compensatory measures for the communities concerned.

"I have said and I repeat that this will take place with accompanying economic and social measures so the trauma forecast by some people will not occur," he said.

The 90-minute parade, which cost 40 million francs ($8 million) to stage, was not affected by military budget cuts.

Some 156 aircraft, 4,500 soldiers, 300 vehicles and 250 horses of the Republican Guard took part.

The police, whose role is usually limited to controlling crowds of sightseers and diverting traffic, marched in the parade for the first time, just ahead of the bearded Foreign Legion pioneers.



Jets trailing the blue, white and red colours of France fly over the Arc De Triomphe during the annual Bastille Day military parade on the Champs Elysee in Paris Sunday. The parade was highlighted by the participation of visiting South African President Nelson Mandela, British aircraft joining the fly-past and Paris police parading alongside the military for the first time (Reuter photo)



Fish witness underwater marriage

ORLANDO, Florida (R) — Before God, the state of Florida and a chorus of angelfish, they married. The bride, in green neon goggles and a wetsuit swam to her groom at the sandy bottom of the tropical reef aquarium at Sea World, a white veil floating like a cloud behind her. The groom in a black wet suit with white bow tie and cummerbund, smiled at her through speckles of fish food that glowed in the blue light like diamonds. More than 1,000 exotic fish were in attendence Saturday at the wedding of Sea World curator of fishes John Kerivan, 48, and 28-year-old Grace Pawlak, a high school science teacher. The Orlando couple decided to marry in the 160,000-gallon fishtank because it was the spot where they first met four years ago when Ms. Pawlak worked there. "This is not an ordinary occurrence," said Sea World spokeswoman Becca Bides, noting that the theme park does not offer wedding services. Bride and groom appeared nervous as they struggled with last-minute preparations in an entry pool above the tank where several dozen wedding guests and tourists pressed their noses to the glass in awe. "Honey," he said. "Sweetie" she said as she spit into her goggles and wiped them clean. Friends helped Ms. Pawlak attach her veil, which came complete with a seeded pearl tiara. "We're taking the plunge," she said in a jittery voice as she grabbed a boquet of white silk flowers. Sunlight streamed through the stained glass windows at the front entrance of the attraction as the two stood surrounded by faux multicoloured coral, blowing bubbles and pantomiming their vows. A notary public, uncomfortable in a puce wetsuit, held up cue cards in lieu of talking them through the ceremony. As they exchanged rings, schools of electric blue, yellow and orange fish fluttered about their heads. "You may now kiss the bride," the cue card instructed, at which point Mr. Kerivan took off his mouthpiece and laid a huge kiss on his new bride. The ceremony ended when husband and wife smiled, faced their applauding audience on the other side of the glass and held up matching cue cards that said, "I do." "They have nowhere to go but up from here," said one onlooker as the couple floated to the surface.The photograph shows Mr. Kerivan, and Ms. Pawlack take "the big plunge" in the underwater "coral reef." (Reuter photo)

Sri Lankan Tigers kill 13 troops in tit-for-tat attack

COLOMBO (AFP) — Tamil Tigers Sunday smashed a military bunker and killed 13 soldiers in the biggest attack against the army in northern Sri Lanka since the region was wrested from rebel control in December, officials said.

Gunmen of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) launched the pre-dawn assault in the village of Sarasali and triggered a 45-minute fire fight, a military statement here said.

"Troops retaliated with artillery and small arms fire," the statement said. "Later the terrorists fled the area carrying their dead and wounded. Ground troops confirm that the terrorists suffered heavy casualties."

The military took the northern peninsula of Jaffna, the main bastion of the LTTE and the symbol of Tamil separatism, after operations begun in October. The government symbolically raised the national flag in Jaffna on Dec. 5 to mark the fall of the town.

Since then, Tiger infiltrators have staged small scale hit-and-run attacks against security forces and a suicide bomber unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate Housing Minister Nimal Siripala Da Silva on July 4, but killed some 31 others.

On Friday, troops discovered 100 hand grenades at Urumpirai in Jaffna peninsula following a tip off, the Defence Ministry said.

Sunday's attack was not unexpected. Government forces are considered insufficient to hold the 900-square-mile (2,340-square kilometre) peninsula and fight the Tigers in the east of the country.

Five days ago, the army mounted a drive against the LTTE in the eastern district of Batticaloa in a bid to flush out cadres who had escalated attacks in the coastal region.

Military officials said at least 22 guerrillas were killed in the latest drive code-named Tidal Wave launched with air force and navy support in the jungles of Batticaloa.

Ground troops killed two LTTE cadres overnight Friday while artillery units fired at suspected rebel concentrations deep inside the jungle, officials said.

"We have intercepted Tiger radio communications saying that three of their cadres were killed in artillery attacks and many more wounded," a military spokesman said.

He said there were no losses on the army side but several soldiers were seriously wounded in close range fighting.

Nuclear accident hit U.S. base in Britain, campaigners say

LONDON (R) — Anti-nuclear campaigners said Sunday they had evidence that an accident at a U.S. air base in 1958 spread nuclear contamination across a densely populated area of southern England.

But Britain's Ministry of Defence, while acknowledging that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) had got hold of confidential documents related to the accident, denied that nuclear material had been involved.

CND spokesman Eddie Goncalves said the accident occurred when a B-47 bomber flying at 7-8,000 feet (2,000 to 2,300 metres) got into engine trouble and was forced to jettison its wing-tip fuel tanks.

He said one of the tanks, instead of landing in an emergency drop zone at the Greenham Common Air Base, came down 65 feet (21 metres) behind a parked B-47 equipped with nuclear weapons.

The resulting fire caused the release of radioactive material, he alleged.

"CND has documents which show the radioactive fall-out from the accident at Greenham Common settled across a large area of West Berkshire and North Hampshire... About 150,000 people live in the area found by scientists to be contaminated," he said.

Mr. Goncalves said that in 1961, scientists at the British government's Nuclear Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston, 10 kilometres from Greenham Common, tested for radioactivity around their plant.

He said CND now had a copy of their report which showed they found an estimated 10-20 grammes of finely powdered uranium in a large area around the air base.

A Defence Ministry spokeswoman said: "There was an incident in 1958 involving a B-47 airplane. At the time there was speculation it was a nuclear accident. It was not."

She said the Aldermaston report did not justify the conclusion that there was a nuclear accident at the base.

However, the Sunday Tele-graph newspaper noted that a "cluster" of leukaemia cases in Newbury, the town nearest to Greenham Com-mon has long puzzled doctors.

The paper, which said it had also seen the leaked documents, said the area of Newbury they identified as at most risk from the accident had seen the highest incidence of such cases.

Newbury's member of parliament, David Rendel, said he has written to Defence Secretary Michael Portillo demanding that he should make public the 1961 re-port.

"Local people had the right to know about the risk to their health then and they have a right to know now," said Mr. Rendel, a member of the minority Liberal Democrats.

Greenham Common was the centre of anti-nuclear protests in the 1980s when a group of women set up camp outside its gates to demonstrate against the stationing of U.S. cruise missiles there. The base was closed down in 1988.

Martyrs' Day is seen as more than a commemoration in Burma

RANGOON (R) — Burma marks Martyr's Day this week and it is being seen as a key test in shaky relations between the country's military rulers and the opposition, led by Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Many were waiting to see if Ms. Suu Kyi would hold an alternative ceremony on the national mourning day to mark the July 19, 1947 assassination of her father, independence hero General Aung San, and eight others who were killed as they planned for the handover of an independent Burma from Britain.

Ms. Suu Kyi, who participated in the military government's official ceremony last year only days after being released from six years of house arrest, has not said if she will attend this year's function or stage a separate one.

On Saturday she said formal ceremonies were not necessary to honour the country's national heroes.

"In my opinion, we honour our dead leaders, not by holding formal ceremonies, but by doing what they would have wished us to do," Ms. Suu Kyi told a gathering at her front gates which has become a weekly weekend feature.

Government officials would not say if Ms. Suu Kyi had been invited to participate in this year's ceremony. Traditionally, the children or relatives of all the assassinated "martyrs" are invited to lay a wreath at the Martyrs' Mausoleum.

Last year Ms. Suu Kyi made a subdued appearance at the ceremony and quietly placed baskets of flowers at the mausoleum that commemorates her father and six of his ministers, a secretary and bodyguard who were slain as they held a cabinet meeting.

In the year since then Ms. Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) party have been in a war of words with the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).

Last week, Ms. Suu Kyi defiantly vowed to go ahead with the party's plan to draft a new constitution despite a sweeping new law introduced by the SLORC last month forbidding such a move.

Ms. Suu Kyi told Reuters in an interview last week the NLD had instructed her and other party leaders to draft an alternative charter to the one being drawn up by a military-appointed convention.

"The party congress gave us the responsibility of drawing up a draft constitution and we will go ahead with that," she said.

The government-appointed convention has been meeting since January 1993 to draft guidelines of a pro-military charter. Ms. Suu Kyi angered the SLORC in November when she pulled the NLD out of the talks, saying they did not represent the will of the people.

Over the past few months the SLORC has cracked down on the NLD with arrests and regular criticism of the party and Ms. Suu Kyi in the official media and at government-sponsored mass rallies.

Its new law, passed just after the NLD's May party congress, also prohibits anyone from doing anything seen likely to disrupt national unity or the constitutional process.

Diplomats and observers said they were watching to see if Ms. Suu Kyi would hold any sort of alternative Martyrs' Day ceremony this year, which could be seen as a direct affront to the SLORC.

"We are just waiting to see what she does. That's all we can do here is wait," said one Rangoon resident.

The events of Martyrs' Day six years ago appeared to be the impetus behind Ms. Suu Kyi's arrest on July 20, 1989.

Instead of laying a wreath that day, Ms. Suu Kyi, who had criticised the military and said she doubted they would ever keep their promise of transferring power to a civilian government, and the NLD had planned a march to pay tribute to the martyrs.

After authorities quickly filled the streets with troops, Ms. Suu Kyi called off the march because she feared bloodshed. The next day she was placed under house arrest.

Meanwhile the European Union (EU) will come under pressure Monday to impose sanctions on Burma for suppressing its democracy movement and the death in prison of an honorary European consul.

Denmark is expected to lead calls for action against Rangoon at a meeting of foreign ministers from the 15-nation bloc in Brussels.

But diplomats said other EU states, notably Burma's former colonial ruler Britain, were reluctant to act without broad international support.

Michael Jackson, Prince Charles at Brunei bash

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (R) — Pop superstar Michael Jackson and Britain's Prince Charles are both in Brunei for the birthday celebrations of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Monday, officials said. Jackson arrived quietly in a chartered flight early Saturday and is scheduled to perform at the opening of Brunei's multi-million dollar Jerudong Theme Park Tuesday, officials at the state airport said Sunday. He has been staying at a guest house in the park and has not been seen in public since his arrival, the officials added. "His equipment is being set up on the stage for him to perform," an official at the Jerudong Park told Reuters. It is not known if Jackson's performance will be open to the public. Prince Charles, who arrived Sunday for a three-day visit, had an audience with Sultan Hassanal and toured the British Council Language Training Centre before retiring to a guest palace at the Jerudong Park. The prince will take a jungle tour with Brunei troops and play a polo match with the sultan during his stay. Officials said a huge and costly celebration with parades has been scheduled for the sultan, who turns 50 and whose fortune is estimated at $30 billion.

Anti-road protesters hold party on highway

LONDON (R) — Hundreds of anti-traffic protesters clad in carnival clothes held a party on one of the main highways into London, causing traffic chaos in the British capital. The demonstrators succeeded in closing off the westway flyover to the west of the city centre by blocking traffic with parked cars and scaffolding. The "party" began at about 2 p.m. and protesters were still dancing to loud music in the early evening. Police first tried to break up the party but gave in and allowed it to go ahead.

Olympics-mystery, tragedy in park bricks

ATLANTA (R) — A lot of romance, some tragedy and a touch of mystery were underfoot when a park designed to be the public hub of the Olympic Games opened to the public for the first time. While officials gave speeches and commercial sponsors opened gleaming pavilions, many visitors looked downwards to inspect thousands of personalised bricks forming paths and squares in the 21-acre (9.5-hectare) Centennial Olympic Park. The bricks are a mosaic of messages, some puzzling and others mysterious, bought by the public to raise cash for the games and also to reserve a small piece of eternity in Atlanta.

Woman with corpse in suitcases held in India

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A woman carrying three suitcases packed with human body parts hailed a cab in southern India but was arrested when the driver reported the gory baggage to the police, the Press Trust of India said Sunday. The unnamed woman identified herself as a physician after her arrest late Saturday in the tourist resort of Kodaikanal but refused to answer police detectives' questions, it said. The cab driver reported the three suitcases to the police when his fare jumped out of the cruising taxi and boarded a bus, leading to a police chase and her eventual arrest. The police said the suitcases were neatly packed with sliced-up parts of an adult male body. This was the second such incident in the region since July 10 when two other corpses were found inside a sack, they added. The woman has been charged with first-degree homicide.

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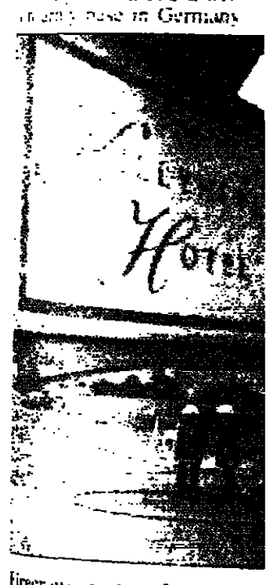
N. Ireland

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The IRA ended a 17-[illegible] in February by [illegible] Britain and a Bri[illegible] base in Germany



Firecrews water down the Killyhevlin Hotel Sunday (Re

Bertha's rain

HYANNIS, Mass. (R) — The re[illegible] drenched the northeastern Unite[illegible] as it fought its way up the Atlantic [illegible] The storm, blamed for eight [illegible] deaths, churned up the Atlantic co[illegible] as it still a tropical storm but [illegible] said Scott Reynolds, a meteo[illegible] Weather Service. "By midnight i[illegible] All along the Atlantic seaboa[illegible] that the storm had caused mass[illegible] estimates of actual insured losses [illegible] North Carolina coast, where win[illegible] with 160 kph), were not expecte[illegible] As the storm made what was ex[illegible] area's land, scattered street flo[illegible] made life outdoors miserable bu[illegible] problems, emergency officials sa[illegible] "We have no reports of powe[illegible] death, due to the storm," said Co[illegible] the National Guard in Framingha[illegible] By 5 p.m. est (2100 GMT), Bea[illegible] of Bridgeport, Connecticut, with [illegible] 62kph), the National Weather Se[illegible]

Cuban exiles

KEY WEST, Florida (R) — [illegible] An anti-Castro Cuban exile [illegible] flotilla held a memorial ser[illegible] vice without incident Satur[illegible] day in international waters [illegible] off the coast of Cuba, re[illegible] leasing dozens of red, white [illegible] and blue balloons in the [illegible] hope they would drift over [illegible] Havana.

The flotilla marked the [illegible] 3rd anniversary of the sink[illegible] ing of the Cuban tugboat [illegible] Thirteen Of March by Cu[illegible] ban patrol boats.

Forty-one Cuban civilians [illegible] reportedly drowned in the



The twisted wreckage of the car bomb lay in front of the bombed out Kilyhevlin Hotel Sunday. A ten-minute warning was given prior to the blast which is the first since the ceasefire two years ago (Reuter photo)

N. Ireland hotel bombed as violence spirals

BELFAST (R) — Suspected Republican guerrillas bombed a Northern Ireland hotel Sunday, raising the prospect of renewed tit-for-tat violence in the province by their Protestant "loyalist" foes after a two-year break.

Forty people were injured, none seriously, when bombers left a device outside the luxury hotel at Enniskillen, near the Irish border, just after midnight. A warning was given and guests were evacuated moments before the blast.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA), which is fighting British rule of the province, denied responsibility for the attack in a call to the Irish state RTE radio and television network.

The IRA ended a 17-month truce in February by bombing Britain and a British army base in Germany, but has avoided attacks in Northern Ireland for fear of loyalist retaliation, police say.

The bomb followed days of Catholic riots across the province in protest at a police decision to allow parades by Protestant Orange Order supporters through Catholic areas and nudged the province closer to a return to all-out sectarian warfare.

David Ervine, a politician close to loyalist gunmen, said the bomb almost certainly spelled the end of a truce declared by the two main Protestant guerrilla groups in October 1994.

Asked by Reuters if the bomb meant the end of the loyalist ceasefire, Mr. Ervine, of the Progressive Unionist Party replied: "Yes, I'm afraid it does."

"It's been a bad-week but last night I'm afraid is perversely the icing on the cake. This is a terrible situation. Frustration is no excuse for violence," he said.

Spokesmen for Sinn Fein, the political wing of IRA guerrillas, did not know if the Enniskillen bomb was carried out by their military backers.

"I don't know whose bomb this is," said Martin McGuinness, chief Sinn Fein strategist.

"I think we have to await judgement on that or to hear from someone in the course of today or the next few days...There is no doubt that we have a very serious situation indeed."

The violence shattered a two-year spell in which the British and Irish governments tried to organise all-party peace talks and left the province's politics at the mercy of pro-Irish and pro-British extremists.

British and Irish ministers united in condemning the Enniskillen attacks after a two-day row in which the Dublin government accused its British partner of surrendering to Protestant militants over the Orange Order marches.

Michael Ancram, Britain's political affairs minister for Northern Ireland, said it was "a despicable and cowardly attack" and said he hoped it did not signal a return to wholesale violence in the province itself.

The IRA has not targetted Northern Ireland since it ended a 17-month ceasefire in February by bombing Britain and a British army base in Germany to get London to drop all conditions for Sinn Fein's entry into the pace talks.

"I hope it is not the resumption of a full campaign of bombing. If it is, the British government stands fully resolved to deal with that with all the forces at its disposal," said Mr. Ancram, hinting at a huge security crackdown.

Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring said he feared the worst unless all parties could be brought to the negotiating table. Sinn Fein is barred until the IRA renews its truce.

"The leadership of the parties in Northern Ireland are going to have to come to the table, get the all-party talks started in real dialogue, meaningful negotiations or otherwise I fear — I say this reluctantly — that we are facing a recurrence of what we had for the past 25 years," he told British television.



Firecrews water down the smouldering remains of the bombed front of the Killyhevlin Hotel Sunday (Reuter photo)

Russian army's action is driving Chechens into arms of rebels

GROZNY, Russia (R) — Boris Yeltsin described the war in Chechenya as the greatest disappointment of his first term as Russian president.

Less than two weeks into his second, many Chechens are wondering if he has learned anything.

A ceasefire he agreed with separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev during his reelection campaign ended this week when the Russian army bombed several villages, destroying homes and killing and wounding civilians.

Moscow insists it is retaliating for ceasefire violations by separatist guerrillas. Mr. Yandarbiyev, whose mountain base the army says is under siege, issued a statement at the weekend insisting that international observers be brought in.

Stuck in the middle are ordinary Chechens, many of whom have no great love for the rebels or their dream of an independent Muslim state, but who find it hard to forgive Mr. Yeltsin for 19 months of war that has made hundreds of thousands homeless.

They find it hard to escape the conclusion that the president, after a short break for the election, has simply resumed the heavy-handed tactics of the first half of this year.

The bombardments and the army's failure to meet a ceasefire obligation to dismantle deeply unpopular checkpoints across the region risk consolidating support for the rebels, some say.

"Before, half the people were for the rebels and half against," one old man said as he watched planes drop high explosive on his village, Gekhi, last week.

"Now 90 per cent are behind them. We'd rather live in peace with the Russians. But it seems we can't. They just want to kill us off. If it takes a thousand years we'll keep fighting."

A measure of the strength of feeling in the mainly Muslim region was the anger even of Chechen forces loyal to Moscow.

"The one thing we can learn from this is never to trust the Russian government," a Chechen policeman said as he watched dust clouds billow from the blasts of what Russian commanders said was "pinpoint" bombing of Gekhi.

The head of Gekhi's administration said 14 civilians were killed and 72 wounded in four days of bombing. Residents herded behind a military cordon feared their homes would be looted, as had happened in other villages earlier this year.

Western governments, which rallied behind Mr. Yeltsin in his campaign to prevent Communists returning to the Kremlin, have begun to express new concern at Russian tactics in Che-chenya.

U.S. Vice-President Al Gore, who arrived in Moscow Saturday for talks with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Mr. Yeltsin, called for the ceasefire to be renewed.

But the signals from Moscow are confusing.

Alexander Lebed, the tough-talking reserve general whom Mr. Yeltsin appointed Kremlin security chief after he came third in the first round of the election, said last week the conflict could not be solved by force.

Almost in the same breath, he said: "If we have to use the army again, it will not stop."

Mr. Yeltsin himself has kept out of sight, claiming fatigue.

Gen. Lebed secured the sacking of Defence Minister Pavel Grachev and other Kremlin hawks in his first few days in office, prompting speculation he might take a less hardline approach.

He appears to have given his full backing to the serving commander in Chechenya, Lieutenant-General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, who has said he sees no point in continuing peace negotiations with "bandits and terrorists" under which Moscow had promised to withdraw its troops by Sept. 1.

The army has, however, proved unable to defeat the rebels and its tactics last week are scarcely calculated to win the hearts and minds of civilians.

Even with peace talks, the question of Chechen independence — which Moscow fears could trigger a chain reaction among ethnic minorities — will not be quickly settled. Without talks, the war risks dogging Mr. Yeltsin well into his second term.



Soldiers sit next to an armoured personnel carrier covering a Russian convoy leaving Grozny Saturday. Boris Yeltsin described the war in Chechenya as the "greatest disappointment" of his first term as Russian President. A ceasefire he agreed with separatist leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev during his reelection campaign erupted in violence this week when the Russian army bombed several villages, destroying homes and killing and wounding civilians (Reuter photo)

Bertha's rains slash New England as storm fades

HYANNIS, Mass. (R) — The remnants of hurricane Bertha drenched the northeastern United States Saturday but damage was light as the killer storm faded into the cold North Atlantic.

Pulses of intense rain accompanied by strong winds pummelled the region, but there were no fresh reports of injuries as the storm, blamed for eight deaths since its birth last week, danced up the Atlantic coastline.

"It's still a tropical storm but it won't be much longer," said Scott Reynolds, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service. "By midnight it should be a memory."

All along the Atlantic seaboard businesses complained that the storm had caused massive loss of revenues. But estimates of actual insured losses, especially on the hard-hit North Carolina coast, where winds reached more than 100 mph (160 kph), were not expected for several days.

As the storm made what was expected to be its last move across land, scattered street flooding and downed trees made life outdoors miserable but did not cause any severe problems, emergency officials said.

"We have no reports of power outages, no injuries or deaths due to the storm," said Colonel George Callahan of the National Guard in Framingham, Mass.

By 5 p.m. est (2100 GMT), Bertha's centre was just south of Bridgeport, Connecticut, with winds of about 45 mph (72 kph), the National Weather Service said. The storm was accelerating toward the northeast at 26 mph (42 kph).

The storm created a swath of minor damage from North Carolina up the coastline, but spared the mid-Atlantic region the harsh battering many had feared.

"We're very, very fortunate. This storm could have been a lot worse," Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Director James Lee Witt told a briefing in Washington Saturday.

Early Saturday, nine were injured slightly as Bertha whipped up a tornado that destroyed two mobile homes and damaged several others in Virginia's Northumberland county on Chesapeake Bay.

About 2 inches (5 cm) of rain fell in the New York area, where there were scattered power outages and flooding, as there was in much of the storm's path.

Tens of thousands of homes Saturday from North Carolina to New York lost power and some were not expected to get back power until Monday.

No storm-related deaths were reported Saturday, but at least two persished Friday.

A female driver in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, was killed about 5:30 p.m. (2130 GMT) when her car collided with a pickup truck in hurricane conditions, police said.

A 41-year-old man who ignored warnings to stay out of the ocean died while surfing Friday in Ocean Beach, New Jersey, police said.

Cuban exiles hold memorial outside Cuba waters

KEY WEST, Florida (R) — An anti-Castro Cuban exile flotilla held a memorial service without incident Saturday in international waters off the coast of Cuba, releasing dozens of red, white and blue balloons in the hope they would drift over Havana.

The flotilla marked the 2nd anniversary of the sinking of the Cuban tugboat Thirteen Of March by Cuban patrol boats.

Forty-one Cuban civilians reportedly drowned in the incident as they were trying to flee the Communist-run island nation.

A dozen exile boats made the 120 kilometre journey to a site 20 kilometres off the coast of Havana, just outside the Cuban 12-mile (19 kilometre) limit.

They dropped wreaths into the water, along with the ashes of 28-year-old Juan Bernardo Varela, who survived the 1994 tugboat sinking and eventually made his way to Miami, only to succumb to cancer several weeks ago.

Exiles say the stolen tug, packed with refugees, was deliberately rammed and sprayed with high-pressure hoses. The Cuban government claims the sinking was an accident.

The anniversary was marked last year by a similar flotilla in which participants cast funeral wreaths into the sea.

The flotilla left Key West before dawn on a journey to the Cuban coast, just outside Cuba's 12-mile territorial limit.

The boats ranged from 25-foot (7.6 metres) fishing vessels to the 57-foot (17 metres) Latigo. More than 100 people were involved in the flotilla.

In addition to balloons in the colours of the Cuban flag, the protesters released a large green helium-filled balloon with the word "Democracia" emblazoned on it. The balloon sailed up and west along the coast before it disappeared from sight.

Divorce ends royal headache for British monarchy

LONDON (R) — The marriage of Prince Charles and Princess Diana, designed to lead the British monarchy securely into the 21st century, turned out to be royal family's greatest headache for more than 50 years.

Sealed with a kiss on the balcony of Buckingham Palace before a worldwide television audience of millions, the 1981 wedding of the shy young virgin to the handsome heir to the throne looked like the stuff of fairy tales.

But the marriage has now disintegrated in the same glare of publicity, with the announcement Friday that the couple have agreed a divorce settlement.

And the authority of the monarchy has taken a bashing from which it could prove difficult to recover.

"The adultery, the mud-slinging, the public warfare in front of the children — all have left wounds which will take a long time to heal," said royal biographer Anthony Holden.

"Can the nation now forgive and forget, gradually rebuilding its shaken faith in the battered and bruised institution of monarchy?," Mr. Holden asked.

As Prince Charles and Princess Diana traded insults in the press through their "friends" and tawdry revelations about their joint infidelities made front-page headlines around the world, Britons began questioning whether the prince was fit to be king.

Newspapers have unanimously declared the terms of the divorce a defeat for Princess Diana, who had been determined to carve out a public role for herself.



A Russian militiaman searches the suitcase of a man entering the Moscow metro Sunday. Russian Interior Ministry troops have stepped up patrols in the capital after two bomb blasts on trolleybuses triggered a terrorist alert and stiffened the Kremlin's resolve to rid the city of crime (Reuter photo)

Moscow on alert as Gore arrives

MOSCOW (R) — Russian security forces were on high alert Sunday as Muscovites, alarmed by two trolleybus bombs last week, braced themselves for a new working week.

Tension continued to run high in breakaway Chechenya after fresh weekend fighting as U.S. Vice-President Al Gore began an official visit to Moscow.

Mr. Gore was due Monday to meet President Boris Yeltsin — the first Western leader to do so since the 65-year-old Kremlin chief won reelection for a second four-year term on July 3.

Troops patrolled Moscow's underground railway and the rest of the public transport system in a security crackdown imposed after the bus bombs, both during the morning rush-hour, injured 33 people last Thursday and Friday.

Eight people injured in Friday's explosion remained in intensive care, Interfax News Agency reported.

Interior Ministry soldiers checked documents of people they deemed suspicious while others, including young cadets, checked stations and carriages of the heavily-used Metro network.

"I want to live a little longer," 72-year-old Galina explained as she looked under her seat.

The trolleybus blasts have increased tension in the city of nine million people, recovering from a bitter presidential election campaign. No one has claimed responsibility for them.

"Undeclared war against Muscovites," the Izvestia daily said in a front-page headline Saturday.

The Moskovsky Komsomolets daily said Sunday transport depots and other important buildings were under constant guard.

Moscow's popular Mayor Yuri Luzhkov offered a big reward for help in finding the bombers and police issued an identikit picture of one suspect.

Mr. Luzhkov and other officials have suggested Chechen rebels may be behind the bombings. But the rebels, in a statement to ITAR-TASS news agency in Turkey, denied involvement and Russian officials admit they have no hard evidence of a link.

Mr. Gore and his high-powered team, which includes Defence Secretary William Perry and Commerce Secretary Mickey Kantor will have a chance to assess Russian policy after the election.

"We will undertake to engage the Russians in what we hope will be a deep and constructive exchange about where we go from here and about how reform can best be given momentum," Mr. Gore said in an interview before his talks.

His meeting with Mr. Yeltsin could also provide clues to the health of the president who suffered two heart attacks last year and has largely been out of the public eye since June 26. Aides said he had suffered with a cold and problems with his voice.

Mr. Gore, who visited Moscow's Izmailovo open-air art market with his wife Tipper Sunday, was due to have a working dinner with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, whom Mr. Yeltsin wants to keep as his premier, on Sunday evening. They co-chair a commission on issues from business Development to Defence.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation.
Established 1975

جريدة أردنية يومية عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

The French balancing role

IN A world order that is increasingly becoming isolationist, there is fresh breeze of gentle but resolute engagement coming from France. The Gaullist president, Jacques Chirac, who so far visited Lebanon, Egypt and Saudi Arabia this year is now coming to Jordan in September.

In a Middle East that is coming increasingly under American, and by extension, Israeli dominance, the French overtures and approach to the problems that plague the region could provide a counter balance, no matter how tiny, to American bias towards Israel.

The French are already on record as warning Israel that they would lower the level of relations with the Jewish state if the policies of the new hardline government of Benyamin Neta-nyahu led to stoppage of the peace process.

The French also showed reluctance at receiving the Israeli prime minister. Paris played a major role in ending former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres' aggression on Leanon in April. Foreign Minister Herve de Charette spent weeks in the region then trying to put an end to the Israeli onslaught and to negotiate a ceasefire between Israel and the Lebanese Hizbollah fighters. France is now one of five countries monitoring the truce in South Lebanon.

Only last week the French president visited Saudi Arabia and held long hours of talks with Saudi leaders over issues that included the Middle East peace process, terrorism and relations between the Arab and Muslim Worlds and the West. France, among the members of the European Union, has been very critical of the monopoly which the U.S., with the blessing of Britain, has been trying to claim on the peace process.

And despite repeated rebuffs from its ally, the U.S., France has persisted in its insistence that the Euro-peans should have more say in the affairs of its immediate neighbours, the Arabs.

What we hope for here in the Mid-dle East is that France would double its efforts both within the EU and the Middle East to get the Europeans more involved in the politics of the region and to provide greater cou-nter balance to the policies of Washington.

ARABIC PRESS COMMETARIES

ONE CERTAIN way for evicting the Israelis from the occupied Arab lands lies in making the occupation much more costly for them than the profit they may gain from retaining Arab lands, said Munes Razzaz, a writer for Al Ra'i Sunday. Indeed, the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had more than once stated that he wanted to get rid of Gaza at any cost, simply because it had caused the Jewish state so much headache and many losses, said the writer. The French were evicted from Algeria in the same way and the American were forced to evacuate Vietnam following heavy losses inflicted, in men and material, noted the writer. Now that we have heard Netanyahu's hardline stance regarding the Arab territories under Israeli occupation and witnessed the U.S. Congress' enthusiastic support for the Israeli premier's stand, said the writer, we are convinced, more than at any time in the past, that dipiomatic efforts and proposed peaceful solutions for the Middle East problem require a series of shocking actions that would inflict huge losses on the Israelis, forcing them to abandon the Arab land, he suggested. The writer said that the road to violence is ugly and wrought with danger, but it seems to be the only way, having seen the U.S. Congressmen raising their hats to Netanyahu's stands and encouraging him to wage war on the Arabs.

IN LIGHT of statements by their leaders, the Arabs and the Israelis are on a collision course concerning the situation in the Middle East and their respective stands vis-à-vis a settlement of the conflict, said Hamadeh Faraaneh, a writer for Al Dustour. While the Arabs are adhering to the land-for-peace formula and the concept of the Madrid conference which was based on U.N. Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 425, the new leaders of Israel totally disregard the international legitimacy and the rights of the Arabs in their lands which have been under occupation since 1967, noted the writer. By stating in Washington that he is concerned only with protecting Israel's interests through expanding the settlements on Arab lands, holding on to a united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and denying the Palestinians the right to a homeland in Palestine, Netanyahu is acting no different from his predecessors, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin who spared no effort to secure what is best for the Israelis at the expense of the Arab Nation, continued the writer.

هكذا من الأصل

Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Pharmaceutical industry's two big complaints

THE PHARMACEUTICAL industry recently voiced complaints about the government's rigid medicine prices and the stiff competition that market incumbents face domestically.

The Ministry of Health, the industry claims, has not allowed any increase in the prices of some medical products in the past 10 years. Furthermore, they complain that internal domestic competition, which is usually severe, is rising and possibly causing the sales of the incumbent firms to fall because six newcomers are preparing to enter the market. However, the pharmaceutical industry, which has enjoyed a bonanza so far, is behaving somewhat lazily in the face of its new challenges, namely, globalisation and antitrust legislation.

It is true that pharmaceutical products make up 10 per cent of Jordan's total exports, making the pharmaceutical industry a very important component of our economy and possibly our most important export if we were to discount that of the mining sector.

However, the pharmaceutical industry does not have a leg to stand on when it comes to asking the government to allow them to hike the price of medicine. Why? Because the industry is highly profitable as one can easily discern from many empirical observations: first, the industry is profitable since several companies are preparing to enter the market — had the companies been losing, we would have witnessed market exits and not entries; second, the pharmaceutical industry in Jordan has no research and development (R&D) departments because they produce knock-offs of products whose patents are not respected in Jordan, and since the cost of the constituents of medicine, excluding R&D expenditures which usually run in the millions or even billions, are usually low relative to price, the pharmaceutical manufacturing industry in Jordan must enjoy high profits; third, the salaries of pharmaceutical executives are reputed to be among the highest in the country; fourth, the market is highly concentrated in the hands of a few large companies that have successfully formed a cartel to curb competition among themselves, possibly limit market entry since entry is relatively easy, lower quality and product variety which are usually expensive endeavours, and set price and output for each firm.

Thus, from the clear evidence of market entry, lack of innovation-related expenditures and a high monopoly power, one can easily surmise that the pharmaceuticals are not hurting, in fact they are doing better than most industries.

Furthermore, all one needs to become a pharmaceutical manufacturer in Jordan is a large sum of cash, a few products to copy and bingo! The jackpot.

However, as a leader in the Jordanian manufacturing sector, the pharmaceuticals have an important responsibility to society: they must be the companies which spearhead development and growth. In their success lie the hopes and aspirations of a people who has been yearning for industrial emergence and world recognition as a global competitor. To echo the words of Professor Michael Porter from Harvard University, "a nation's competitiveness depends on the capacity of its industry to innovate and upgrade. Companies gain advantage against the world's best competitors because of pressure and challenge. They benefit from having strong domestic rivals, aggressive home-based suppliers and demanding local customers."

Jordanian pharmaceuticals must welcome competition, not subdue it through cartels which soon will become illegal as the long awaited Competition Law takes effect. New ideas must be vigorously pursued and investments in skill and knowledge must be increased. There is no reason for competition to be in a few products that have no value added and that cannot be distinguished from one another. Innovation alone justifies high prices, not only at home but also abroad.

Globalisation will open doors for Jordan and simultaneously close many more for those who do not act. Change must be anticipated and welcomed as part of the game and once a firm achieves a competitive advantage through innovation, it must relentlessly seek improvement. Any advantage can be imitated, competitors will eventually overtake the slow movers and mergers to protect market shares will ultimately fail in the face of the global economy. Our sophisticated industries which form the backbone of our possible advancement must create the most important factors of production: a skilled labour force and a scientific base.

Dole's got a temper but is there a mean streak?

By Deborah Zabarenko
Reuter

WASHINGTON — He may snap at an interviewer, slam the media and get testy at a civil rights leader, but these flashes of temper do not mean Bob Dole's reputed mean streak has returned, political analysts say.

Mr. Dole, the all-but-certain Republican presidential nominee, may have flared up because he is out of his element on the campaign trail, former presidential aide and speechwriter Stephen Hess said.

"When he moves away from his home turf and when things are not going well, he's frustrated, probably a little tired and appears snappish." Mr. Hess said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Dole's rather brooding appearance contributes to the perception of meanness, Mr. Hess said: "He has that sort of Darth Vadar look about him," a reference to the heavy-breathing villain of the "Star Wars" movies.

By contrast, on Capitol Hill, "you would find he has a very good reputation as being accessible, articulate, witty," Mr. Hess said.

Mr. Dole, who got a reputation for grumpiness in earlier runs for the White House, made a series of comments in the last two weeks that got extensive media attention.

— On July 2, after drawing criticism from anti-smoking advocate Dr. C. Everett Koop for saying tobacco may not be addictive to everyone, Mr. Dole told a television interviewer that Mr. Koop "probably got carried away" with media reports on tobacco's addictive properties. Asked whether Mr. Koop had been "brainwashed," Mr. Dole replied: "Probably a little bit."

— In the same interview on NBC's "Today" programme, Mr. Dole bridled at repeated questions about his stance on tobacco companies' role in his campaign. "I'm not in their pocket ... (t)he liberal media crosses that out and goes right back to the Democratic line."

— On July 11, after declining an invitation to speak to the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, the oldest U.S. civil rights group, Mr. Dole said the NAACP's president, former Democratic congressman Kweisi Mfume, was "a very liberal Democrat and I think he was trying to set me up."

Karlyn Holman, an expert on political polling at the American Enterprise Institute, said these comments could be damaging to Mr. Dole in the presidential race, but noted that in some U.S. regions, meanness can be a political asset.

Successful political meanies have been most common in Texas, Holman said by telephone, and include Lyndon Johnson, Jim Hightower, Ann Richards and Sen. Phil Gramm, Dole's former rival for the Republican nomination. Former New York State Gov. Mario Cuomo also showed signs of the trait, she said.

Mr. Dole may have gotten a national reputation for meanness in 1976, when as a candidate for vice president he hammered his Democratic counterpart Walter Mondale in a nationally televised debate, saying 1.7 million Americans were hurt or killed in "Democrat wars in this century."

Mr. Mondale's retort — "I think Sen. Dole has richly earned his reputation as a hatchet man" — cemented the impression.

In 1988, George Bush's presidential campaign circulated literature accusing Mr. Dole of "mean-spiritedness." after a disappointing finish in the New Hampshire primary, Mr. Dole told Mr. Bush through reporters: "Stop lying about my record"

That incident was damaging, because it grabbed the media spotlight, Mr. Holman said, but she added that this year, voters may not be paying attention to the presidential campaign at this stage so the impact of this month's comments by Mr. Dole could be minimal.

Novelist Mark Helprin, a Dole supporter who wrote a well-received farewell speech for Mr. Dole on his departure from the Senate, rejected any claims of a mean streak.

"When people talk about his mean streak, I think they frequently mistake his passion for certain things." Mr. Helprin said in a telephone interview from his home in New York State. "Passion sometimes borders on anger but it's different from being mean ... A mean person is someone who strikes when it's unnecessary and I've never seen Dole do that."

Human Rights File

'Italy has gone too far in fighting death penalty'

By Waleed M. Sadi

THE ITALIAN constitutional court had recently handed down a controversial judgement that barred the extradition to the U.S. of a man accused of committing a crime in that country punishable by death because the state where he would be tried still applies the death penalty for very serious crimes.

The real issue here actually does not lie with the refusal to extradite persons charged with serious crimes from a country that outlaws the death penalty to one that does because, under the international human rights jurisprudence as elaborated by the Human Rights Committee (HRC) charged with monitoring the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), countries which are state parties to the covenant may refuse the extradition of people wanted for serious crimes, punishable by death, even though they are parties to bilateral or multilateral treaties on extraditions binding them to hand over such persons.

Normally countries usually insist on assurances, from the state seeking the extradition of a suspect, that the capital punishment would not be applied if the person in question is convicted and found guilty of a crime punishable by death.

Where Italy has gone beyond the jurisprudence of the HRC is in its refusal to extradite even though the U.S. in this case did forward assurances that the death penalty would not be applied upon conviction.

Against this backdrop, I believe Italy has gone farther than any other state in opposing the application of the capital punishment. What Italy has done in this case is to defeat the administration of justice altogether because when a country refuses to extradite a person suspected of committing a crime, even when there are assurances that the maximum punishment would not be enforced, that person remains free from prosecution anywhere in the world.

One can conclude from the Italian court's decision that any person who commits a very serious crime, like murder, can escape punishment altogether simply by fleeing to Italy where he/she can successfully argue, on the basis of the new Italian court's ruling, that his/her extradition would put his/her life in jeopardy. Surely Italy does not wish to take part in a policy whose end result is to allow people accused of crime loose on the streets of Rome or Napoli without any trial.

It must be recalled here that the ICCPR does not prohibit the death penalty altogether, but encourages countries not to apply it. The HRC, as it is currently constituted, would wish to rewrite the ICCPR so that their philosophy against the capital punishment prevails. The committee members have gone too far already in supporting every attempt to declare the capital punishment as a cruel and inhuman punishment even though they know that the actual wording of the covenant which they are supposed to defend does not go as far as they do in outlawing capital punishment. The Italian member of the committee has been a faithful supporter of other committee members who seek by all sorts of argumentations to frustrate the applications of the ultimate punishment, and it appears that his strong views on the subject prevailed in the Italian constitutional court as well.

I do not wish to argue here the merits or demerits of the death punishment and I think I understand the arguments against it as I have served several years in the HRC when the subject of the capital punishment was repeatedly brought up for deliberations. I remember the discussions within the committee on whether there are ways to make the application of the death penalty less cruel. Many days were spent to argue whether there are means to end the life of convicted criminals in a "more humane" way.

Yes, the death penalty is cruel, no matter what way we choose to administer it, but the international community still believes in this extreme punishment and no committee may legislate by court rulings a policy against the death penalty when the majority of the world still views it as a valuable deterrent to crime.

It only seems to me that Italy has simply gone to far in defending its policy on crime and punishment and that this may end in encouraging criminals to seek refuge in this country as the most effective way to defeat their apprehension and prosecution.

I also fear that people who are involved in organised crime may exploit the new Italian ruling and that the end result would be the defeat of the administration of justice.

I do not think Italy wants to become a haven for criminals, but there is no escape from the conclusion that the recent ruling of the highest court of the land would play into the hands of felons and criminals.

Africa — a view from without

By John Gay Yoh

IT IS often times easy to write on Africa in Africa. That is what I have been doing for a while. Therefore, to write about the continent from without would certainly require some sort of mental readjustment.

A keen reader of African contemporary history would notice that its political history has always been associated with the concepts of African unity and social equality. To a large extent, its political ideals would be, little if at all, different from the Middle Eastern politics.

Like the Arab League, the African big house was established in 1963 to pioneer the continent's political unity and to continue the unfinished job of pushing out the colonial powers. Stationed in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) is housed in a beautiful multi-compound inhabited by diplomats who come from black Africa, north Africa and some whites from southern African region. These diplomats speak English, French, Arabic and Spanish. Looking at them closely one gets the impression that these men and women like their jobs.

On a brief visit to the OAU premises, one would hear these intellectuals talk about their achievements. Of the 42 black African states, four have military rulers. Of the 30 democracies, only half can be classified as peaceful, while Somalia and Liberia are shattered by wars. Rwanda and Burundi are, meanwhile, in intensive care! And news is coming in saying that perhaps Angola and Zaire will soon recover from coma.

Like democracy, human rights has also gained an influential place on African diplomats' agenda. Yet, while all the African countries abhor human rights violations, they all have bad reports of gross human rights violations. Gossip in Addis Ababa says that having failed to forge unity among Africans, the OAU will be soon transformed into an economic community — perhaps an economic union for Africa.

The Yaoundi summit — this week — may pass a resolution to that effect.

Another issue worth mentioning is that the African intellectual community, which has been marginalised since the 1970s, is still at the periphery of national politics. Universities remain, by and large, under government scrutiny. True, private press has been granted some freedom, but free debate among African intellectuals is not encouraged.

What about economies? While Eastern and southern African countries are opening up economically — as prescribed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) — the western African region is still controlled by soldiers-turned politicians. Sadly enough, the central African region has been witnessing upheavals and has become Africa's killing field of this century.

Tribal politics remains to be the accepted medium for political participation of African intellectuals. As politics of tribalism gained momentum, nepotism and corruption became acceptable bureaucratic norms in public and private sectors.

Talking to African economists at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, one is made to believe that the IMF structural adjustment policy is the best medication for all the ills of Africa. And for these intellectuals, the IMF has all the answers for the economic recovery of Africa. The IMF has golden solutions for the kind of political system the continent politicians should adopt. Once the economy is recovered and the democratisation process is on course, the IMF officials believe that Africa can unite automatically. One wonders if the same prescription is applied for the Middle East.

The writer is research fellow at the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, Amman. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Brew with a boost

A drink, made from a fungus that can be cultivated at home, has startling effects as a tonic and may help those affected with conditions such as multiple sclerosis. MANDY FRANCIS sits down for a cup of kombucha tea:

Fungus — in the shape of penicillin — has been one of the greatest life-savers in the history of medicine. Now, a very different form of fungus is causing excitement among sufferers of arthritis and multiple sclerosis. It is suggested that kombucha — a tea-like drink made by fermenting a yeast "pancake" that resembles an exhausted chamois leather — has helped to alleviate many of their symptoms.

Karen Bartlett, 38, has suffered from chronic fatigue syndrome (ME) for more than four years. Exhaustion and painful back and leg cramps had kept her almost housebound until she read an article in her local paper about the fungus, and started brewing and drinking kombucha at home just over a year ago. "I always used to wake up feeling as if I had walked miles overnight," she says. "But almost from the very first glass of kombucha, I noticed a marked difference in my condition. My leg cramps have now lessened to the extent that I can go riding with my daughter — something that I could only have dreamt of doing before — and I definitely don't get as physically or mentally tired as I used to."

It is fast becoming the must-have drink among celebrities, too. Joan Collins is interested in it, and Barbra Streisand and Meg Ryan are big fans. The fungus, a living organism of bacteria and yeast, originates in Russia. It is floated on a bowl of sweetened tea and left to ferment in a warm place (rather like a ginger-beer plant) for about eight days. As it grows, the fungus ferments the tea and the result is a zingy beverage, rich in vitamins, enzymes, minerals and organic acids.

The drink can be made with ordinary black and herbal teas but, among devotees, Japanese green tea is popular as a base for the fermentation process, as it has well-documented antioxidant properties.

Many of the thousands of people who have started to brew kombucha at home actually do not suffer from notable health problems but, like student Jackie Thomas, 39, and her daughter Paloma, 7, they drink it because they believe it boosts their immune system, gives them extra energy and helps control a host of ailments, from skin problems to asthma.

"The first thing I noticed was how healthy my hair looked," says Thomas, "but it also gives us energy and a feeling of general well-being. It also clears up any problems such as candida." The recommended intake is the equivalent of three wineglasses a day.

Kate Powell, a 32-year-old nurse, has three children and works night shifts. She began drinking kombucha as a dietary supplement. "In my job I'm exposed to all kinds of bugs on a daily basis," she says, "so I'm keen to take any preventative measures that will help keep me healthy. For the past 14 months, since I started drinking the tea, I have not even had a cough or a cold, so I've carried on drinking it. Kombucha also seems to have a definite tonic effect: I have lots more energy now than before I started drinking tea. If I stop drinking it for a few days, for any reason, then I really notice the difference."

The beige-coloured fungus reproduces itself over time, creating new fungus that can be prised off the original pancake and which, in turn, can be used for brewing. Powell, like most other brewers, now gives away starter cultures to interested friends. "I like the fact that, unlike vitamin supplements or herbal remedies, which tend to be expensive, kombucha is a gift from nature," she says.

In fact, so great has demand become for kombucha over the past year or so, that there is now a nationwide Kombucha Network, based in Bath, UK, to supply free fungi. The founder, Mari Bartholomew, estimates that they have received more than 14,000 inquiries in the past six months.

Could the answer to many of today's serious illnesses really be found fermenting in the airing cupboard? With little scientific evidence to back up the anecdotal claims for kombucha, however, few doctors recommend it and, indeed, most brewers are keen to emphasise that the fungus drink should not be regarded as a cure-all.

Diana McGovern, 52, of the Myelin Project, an organisation providing help and advice for sufferers of multiple sclerosis, is a recent, if cautious, convert to the brew. "Kombucha has cleared up a long-standing digestive problem and it may well be worth other MS sufferers giving it a go for some of their symptoms — but I do suggest taking it by the teaspoon at first, to avoid any possible adverse reactions." (These include headaches and nausea and are fairly common for first-time drinkers). "Although it does seem to bolster the immune system, it's not a miracle cure for anything and should, like all supplements, be taken with care," says McGovern.

The nutritionist Amanda Ursell has a specialist interest in health foods, and also sounds a word of warning to all would-be kombucha brewers. "As with any fermented product that is stored in a warm environment, chances of contamination are particularly high — so, if you are thinking of brewing your own at home, clear instructions, a healthy starter fungus and clean hands and equipment are absolutely essential."

Sunday Times



The fungus that makes the kombucha drink

Settlers plan expansion

(Continued from page 1)

newspaper said.

According to Haaretz, the U.S. Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross is to visit the region next week to brief Arab leaders on the details of Mr. Netanyahu's talks in Washington.

Mr. Netanyahu's programme demands that the Palestinians stop their alleged violation of the Oslo autonomy accords, notably on Jerusalem and the release of Islamic militants from jail before Israel upgrades its level of contacts with Mr. Arafat, Haaretz said.

In the next stage, discussions on Israel's long-delayed redeployment in the West Bank town of Hebron would begin, followed by talks on further troop pullbacks on the West Bank in line with the autonomy accords.

Mr. Netanyahu has not met Mr. Arafat since his election on May 29, saying he would only consider a face-to-face meeting if it was necessary for Israel's security.

The Palestinian cabinet and PLO leadership on Saturday issued a statement warning Mr. Netanyahu that his policies were threatening the peace process.

The Israeli prime minister has ruled out the creation of a Palestinian state and any negotiations on the future of Jerusalem, and has pledged to press ahead with settlement building in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In Damascus, a Syrian newspaper said that the hardline stances taken by Netanyahu during his U.S. visit had brought the Middle East peace process to a grinding halt.

"The positions taken up by Netanyahu in the United States show that he has driven the peace process to a stalemate," said the ruling party's paper Al Baath.

"Given the soft stance of the American administration and the unconditional support of Congress, we can therefore conclude that the Israeli prime minister has American support to implement his explosive policies," it said.

The paper said Mr. Netanyahu had decided to "implement all the Biblical slogans calling for Jewish settlement and occupation using whatever means necessary such as the cancellation of (peace) accords signed by the previous government and wars."

Mr. Netanyahu re-ignited Arab fury over his hardline policies last week during his five-day trip to the United States, telling an applauding U.S. Congress that Jerusalem would never be divided and that Jews had the right to settle in occupied territory.

The policy programme put forward by Mr. Netanyahu, who defeated peace architect Shimon Peres in May polls, also rules out the creation of a Palestinian state and the return of the Arab land in exchange for peace — including the Golan Heights seized from Syria in 1967.

The official daily Al Thawra said Mr. Netanyahu had "signalled the death of the peace process in front of the American Congress and in the presence of the U.S. president himself by annulling five years of efforts aimed at finding a solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict based on the exchange of land for peace."

"The pursuit of the peace process is impossible as the Arabs will not accept such a mentality and conditions imposing the occupation of their land," added the paper.

The government daily Tishrin said Mr. Netanyahu's public reason for holding onto the strategic Golan plateau, to assure Israel's security, was a "lie" as "it is peace that will lead to security and Mr. Netanyahu cannot take up negotiations with Syria again while at the same time saying he wants to keep the Golan."

20 killed in riots

(Continued from page 1)

A few days earlier the Libyan opposition in exile said at least 12 people, including a key politician, were killed in another clash.

The Libyan opposition in Cairo also said Sunday that eight political detainees were killed in a week-long mutiny at a prison near Tripoli.

"Eight political detainees died during a revolt at the Bouslim prison which lasted a week after breaking out on July 5," said an opposition leader, who asked to remain anonymous.

He said the mutiny "started when dozens of political detainees went on hunger strike to protest against their poor treatment. The prison authorities tried in vain to calm them down before shooting at them, killing eight."

Meanwhile, "around 30 prisoners managed to escape" and "the security forces launched a huge manhunt," he added.

He said Bouslim contains "thousands of political detainees, notably those implicated in a coup d'etat attempt in 1993 as well as many students and Islamic militants."

Opposition sources said last Monday that a prison break had occurred at Bouslim, but they gave no details of casualties or how many escaped.

The official Jana news agency said Friday the Libyan air force was conducting large-scale exercises using live ammunition along the country's Mediterranean coast, but the opposition source, quoting eyewitnesses, said the exercises were a cover for a major operation against Islamic militants.

He said the operation came amid more than three years of clashes between government troops and the armed opposition.

The travellers said Col. Qadhafi, 54, ordered his security officers to shoot on sight members of the Islamist groups opposed to his rule.

Shops belonging to suspected Islamists were burned and others belonging to foreigners shut down, they added.

Analysts say six years of United Nations sanctions and what some see as illogical public expenditure have provoked some Libyans into taking up arms against the state and demanding change.

But Libya has blamed Egyptian and Sudanese immigrants for the unrest within its borders and last year deported hundreds for security reasons.

The United Nations imposed limited sanctions against Libya for its refusal to hand over two suspects wanted in connection with the bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 in which 270 people were killed.

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Capital flight blamed for poor Arab economic performance

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states have amassed nearly $800 billion in investment abroad, creating a liquidity shortage which is smothering their economies, a report said Saturday.

The bulk of the investments, which include around $280 billion in bank deposits, are based in industrial countries, said the Arab Trade Fund Programme (ATFP), which cited international bank statistics.

ATFP, an affiliate of the Cairo-based Arab League, said member states had failed to "strengthen their position on the global economic map" despite what it called their huge oil wealth and other resources.

"With such resources, it is really strange that the Arab economy has remained unable to determine its identity as an effective economic power in face of world blocs," the Abu Dhabi-based ATFP said in its monthly report.

"When we look at the factors which block the revival of the Arab economy, we can see an important element, which is the continued leakage of Arab funds to the international markets instead of being invested locally," the report added.

The report blamed the Arab countries themselves for the capital flight, saying most of them lacked a proper infrastructure and incentive system and failed to open up their economies to each other. Other obstacles include excessive red tape and lack of security for the investments, it said.

ATFP was created by the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund in 1990 with a capital of $500 million to finance flagging inter-Arab trade, which has remained below 15 per cent of the total trade of the 22 Arab League members.

French central bank governor urges reforms, mergers

PARIS (AFP) — France's central bank governor has urged major reforms of the banking system, saying that privileges should be abolished and that mergers were needed.

Bank of France governor Jean-Claude Trichet said that "distortions" and monopolies had to be stopped and that "new groupings are undoubtedly needed."

French banks should consider whether now is the time "for banks to be brought together and to specialise," he said, adding: "We will help them ... to the extent of our means and responsibilities."

Presenting the annual report of the Banking Commission, which he chairs, Mr. Trichet said: "We must put an end to distortions of competition" in French banking and return it to "a normal legal, prescribed and fiscal environment."

Analysts, and bankers here, have long agreed that French banking is overdue for fundamental reform.

But the statement by Mr. Trichet was likely to send shock waves through French banking, which continues to reel from the effects of enormous losses incurred in the property market at the end of the 1990s.

Mr. Trichet said distortions such as monopolies of distribution of some products, or arising from the legal status of some professions had to be ended.

"The financial activities of the post office pose a very serious problem," for example, he said.

"Whatever the legal means used, the outcome must be that bankers must seek to earn profits from their shareholders' funds under comparable conditions," he added.

Banks must "restore their margins," return to "normal conditions of competition" and "control their costs," he urged.

Mr. Trichet reported that overall, 1995 had been a difficult year for French banking but that "signs of an improvement had appeared."

The Banking Commission will use specialists from outside the Bank of France, he said.

The commission will boost on-site supervision because risks are becoming increasingly complicated, he said.

French banks earn relatively low rates of profit, and the banking system is riddled with special arrangements arising from privileges or monopolies granted to the state to promote cheap loans for specific purposes, such as the support of farmers or the management of savings accounts under privileged conditions.

Insurance brokers complain that they cannot compete against privileged terms offered by some state-backed operators.

The president of the private Societe Generale Bank, Marc Vienot, who has challenged the state rescue of Credit Lyonnais Bank before the European Court, warned recently that big French banks would lose their place in international banking unless the government abolished special arrangements.

Credit Lyonnais is the beneficiary of aid limited by the European Commission to 45 billion francs ($9 billion).

This package was approved last July but already the bank faces serious financial problems.

The implications of reforms may be seen in the near bankruptcy of the CFF property bank, which reported a loss of 11 billion francs ($2.2 billion) last year.

The main body blow to CFF occurred at the end of last year when the government, in an attempt to boost the economy, introduced zero-rated housing loans that could be distributed by any bank.

Until then the CFF bank had enjoyed an official monopoly on the issuance of cheap housing loans. Overnight, regulatory change had removed its main prop.

FAO says Iraq harvest 30% lower than '95'

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq is likely to reap another poor harvest this year, with yields expected to be 30 per cent below those of 1995, a senior United Nations official has said.

"I expect that this year will be 30 per cent lower than last year due to severe infestation of wheat," Amir Abdalla Khalil, U.N. Food Agriculture Organisation (FAO) representative in Baghdad, told Reuters.

Mr. Khalil blamed the decline in wheat and barley yields on Iraq's acute shortage of spare parts for tractors, combine harvesters and dust-spraying helicopters.

A FAO report issued last year put Iraq's cereals production at about three million tonnes, a shortfall of about 2.5 million.

No official figures are yet available on this year's harvest. FAO estimates were based on field visits by experts to wheat- and barley-growing areas in the country.

According to U.N. statistics 1995 harvest was about 16 per cent lower than average produce since sanctions were clamped on Iraq for invading Kuwait in 1990.

The U.N. also estimates the consumable cereal output to be even lower than 30 per cent due to the presence of non-grain impurities like dust, stones, straw, weed seeds and remains of insects.

Prior to sanctions domestic produce accounted for about 30 per cent of annual food consumption..

Turkish Islamist populism could hit economy

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's Islamist-led government may jeopardise the country's economic prospects if it presses ahead with the populist policies indicated by a big wage increase awarded to civil servants, analysts have said.

Triple-digit inflation or a widening of already gaping deficits threaten the economy if the new coalition pursues the path of populism at the expense of fiscal discipline, they said.

Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan Tuesday showed his resolve to build voter support with a higher-than-expected 50 per cent public sector wage rise, alarming economists.

"As expected it looks like they're trying to change income distribution, but it seems to me they don't believe in economics and they won't follow the basic rules," said Faruk Selcuk, an associate professor of economics at Ankara's Bilkent University.

Finance ministry officials had warned that a pay increase above 30 per cent would force deviations from the 1996 budget deficit target of 861 trillion lira ($10.5 billion).

More than seven million people, struggling under an annual inflation rate of 82.9 per cent in June, will receive the rise.

The inflation rate is expected to rise sharply if, as some expect, Mr. Erbakan pursues such policies further, analysts said.

"Erbakan won't put the brakes on, he's going to put his foot on the accelerator, pushing inflation towards 150 per cent," said Ali Riza Karduz, a columnist for Sabah newspaper.

Finance Minister Abdul Latif Sener pledged lower inflation on Wednesday despite the fresh 125 trillion lira ($1.5 billion) budget burden and promised bonuses for security forces.

Mr. Erbakan called for a parliamentary debate on increasing wealth taxation, the state-run Anatolian News Agency said.

"Every sort of income from profiteering should be taxed in an active manner, while easing the tax burden on production factors," the agency quoted him as saying in a proposal for a debate in parliament on revenue raising.

Analysts said the near-term benefit to workers of high wage rises will be undermined by the damage to economic stability, but this may not harm Mr. Erbakan's Welfare Party if their unlikely coalition with conservatives were to collapse.

"One day it will kick back, but if they can run out of government with early elections they might have a big success," Bilkent's Selcuk said.

Welfare pledges to tax wealth instead of income, switch to a fixed exchange rate mechanism and restructure the banking system on a profit-sharing basis have previously spooked markets.

"The most worrying thing would be for the government to interfere with market forces, such as by decreasing interest rates artificially," said the general manager of a Western bank in Istanbul.

Analysts said it may resort to wealth taxes in its search for new revenue sources, while writing off agricultural loan interest worth some 350 trillion lira ($4.3 billion).

Four million tourists could flock to Egypt in 1996 — minister

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt expects to play host to a record four million tourists by the end of this year, Tourism Minister Mamduh Al Beltagui said, quoted by the government daily Al Ahram Al Misai. "The number of tourists who came to Egypt in the first five months of 1996 totalled 1.7 million. If we continue at this rate, we expect to reach a total of four million tourists for the whole year," Mr. Beltagui said.

That would be a 30 per cent increase over 1995, which "was our highest year ever with 3.1 million tourists," Mr. Beltagui said.

Mr. Beltagui, quoted in the Arab economic daily Al Alam Al Youm, also said Egypt would almost double its hotel space in the next three years.

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GISEE

ENNIL

ENKORB

YAIWAR



WHAT THE REPORTER CONSIDERED THE SCHOOL VANDALISM.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: "_____" _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: JUICE UNWED PAYOFF SUCKLE
Answer: How he felt after buying a drink at the swanky pool – SOAKED

THE BETTER HALF® By Glasbergen

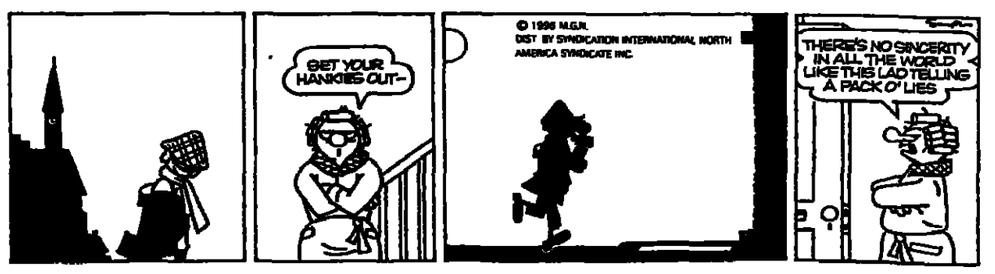


"I'm the Cellulite Fairy! A friend of mine saw you at the deli today!"

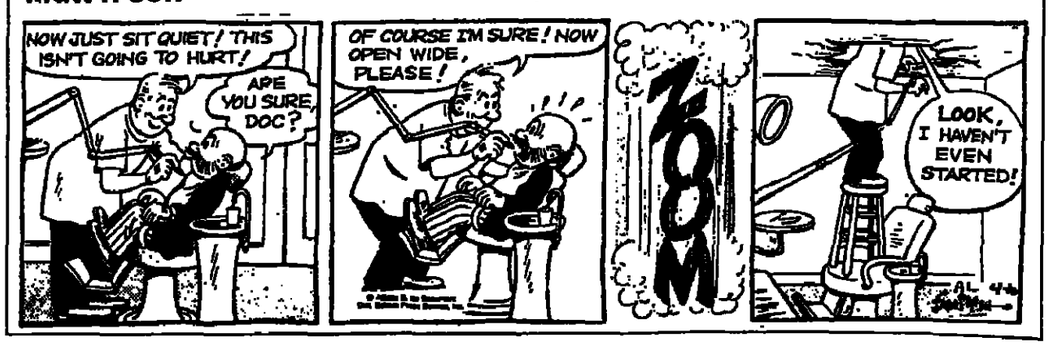
Peanuts



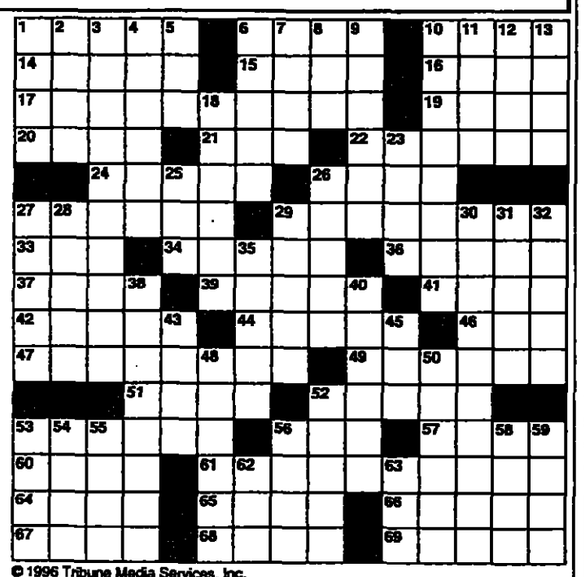
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



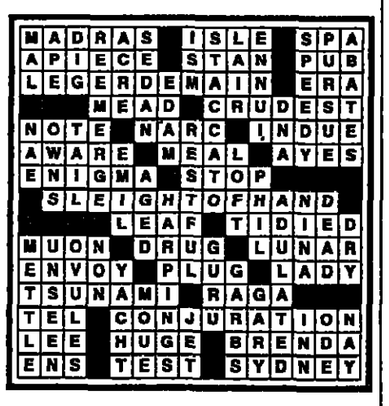
THE Daily Crossword by Teresa M. Hackett



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ACROSS
1 Beat back
6 Kind of saxophone
10 Dart
14 Teheran resident
15 Fruit
16 Assistant
17 Cleared of wrongdoing
19 Short-tailed rodent
20 Entr'—
21 Table scrap
22 Makes up for
24 Eye socket
26 Stadium level
27 Plum variety
29 Schemer
33 Pierre's here
34 Take it easy
36 Church vestment
37 Not perm.
39 Ship's crane
41 Israeli airline
42 Wooded
44 Coffee choice, briefly
46 Shoshone
47 Watched closely
49 "Stranger in Paradise" musical
51 Vintage autos
52 English coppers
53 — dog story
56 From — Z
57 Air: pref.
60 Small horse
61 Trailblazer
64 You said it!
65 One on the move
66 Hold forth
67 Congressman Gingrich
68 Architect Saarinen
69 Botanical sac

DOWN
1 — Ridge (noted racehorse)
2 Author Ambler
3 Speechless acts
4 Nobel bacteriologist
5 Caesar's deck?
6 To pieces
7 European
8 Inventor's monogram
9 Dictate
10 Most loved
11 Pride member
12 Not in use
13 Pipe joints
18 Made money
23 Some bills
25 NYC div.
26 Poisonous
27 Likewise
28 Bitter
29 Gave in
30 Kind of chemical analysis
31 Happify
32 Sublease
35 Scoops soup
38 Ibsen work
40 Accept, as a responsibility
43 Remnant
45 Fiver
48 Long journey
50 Diving ducks
52 Wing: pref.
53 Extend across
54 Place for a range?
55 All over again
56 State firmly
58 Carte
59 Lode stones?
62 Deer
63 "— Skylark"



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, JULY 15,1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Converse with trusted close friends and find out if they will assist you in gaining your personal aims. Later this evening you can meet with fellow associates and labour on some new project until its completion, however, not too late.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Get into your books of accounting today and determine if you have sufficient funds to cover all of your daily expense or whether you will need to cutback. Contact an important person later this evening who can give you support with business.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You may have to plan a trip today which can bring you greater profit, so take it and you will gain quite an amount of prestige. Count the cost well which are involved and get it arranged so that you can make great headway.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Listen to what your mate has to say today which will bring greater accord between you and him or her. Later this evening you can meet with some close friends and go out on the town for some recreational fun.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A strange situation in public arises today which gives you a chance to profit from it and is helpful for your career activities. Later this evening you can go out with your loved ones to some fun location and have a good time.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Find new mechanisms and methods today by which you can become more efficient in whatever your career activities may be. Later this evening will be good for you to stay home with your loved ones and have a good time.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Plan to enjoy more modern types of amusements today and you can feel happier. Show more originality later this evening in dealing with your mate and you will be surprised with the results achieved.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) If you become more interested in what your loved ones are doing and help them you can have more accord at home. Later this evening you can go out on the town with your mate and loved ones and have some fun at recreations.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Show fellow associates you are well-informed at this time about current conditions which can bring you more success. This evening you can complete some new project if you meet with some close friends who can help.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) Get your property more attractive today and modern looking with the use of clever art and you can make your home the envy of those who visit. This evening you can go to some entertaining recreations and have a wonderful time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Making new acquaintances today of delightful personality can bring much pleasure for some time to come. This evening will be good to consult with a knowledgeable person and gain his or her advice in business matters.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Seek new ways of operating today which will bring you greater results in the days ahead. Utilise the best of such later this evening and thereby you can gain the prestige which you desire and has been out of your reach.

Birthstone of July: Ruby — Tiger's Eye

Busine

No quic

(TEL AVIV (R) — The benchmark index of the Tel Aviv stock market has tumbled 11 per cent since the May 29 general election and analysts hold out little hope for a recovery in the near term.

"I am not in the least optimistic. The only question now is where is the bottom," said David Rosenberg, head of research at Bank Mediterranean Investments.

A chart of the Mishtanim index shows a steep decline since the May 29 election, breaking through 200 and 180 weekly moving averages and putting the market into a definite bear phase. The index is currently at 150.91 points against 221.67 on May 29.

Following an initial lull after the election, stock analysts in London had rated Israeli shares a buy.

Indian firm

(MADRAS, India (R) — India's leading firm South-ern Petrochemicals Industries Corp. (SPIC) plans to set up a $365 million fertiliser plant in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), officials have said.

The group also plans to refinance the expansion through a public share offering of global deposi-tory receipts (GDRs).

We plan to raise around $75 million through a GDR issue in September," R. Sundaram, SPIC's finance director, told Reuters.

SPIC had established two wholly-owned subsidiaries in the UAE to manufacture fertiliser consisting of 500,000 tonnes a day of urea and 330,000 tonnes of industrial ammonia ex

Asia's airpor

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Vast tracts of land are being allocated and seas pushed back as Asian countries build enormous new airports, but much more needs to be done to meet the soaring demands of global travel in the 21st century.

With spending on 16 current Asian airport projects set to exceed $50 billion, experts who met recently in Singapore said hundreds of billions of dollars more will be needed to prevent planned runways and congested terminals.

The region is forecast to account for 400 million passengers yearly or half the global total by 2010, from 122 million passengers or a third of world traffic in 1993.

The introduction of a new generation of huge aircraft called "Super Jumbos", perhaps within five years,

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No quick recovery seen for Israeli shares

TEL AVIV (R) — The benchmark index of the Tel Aviv stock market has tumbled 11 per cent since the May 29 general election and analysts hold out little hope for a recovery in the near term.

"I am not in the least optimistic. The only question now is where is the bottom," said David Rosenberg, head of research at Pacific Mediterranean Investments.

A chart of the Mishtanim index shows a steep decline from the May 29 election, breaking through 20- and 200-day moving averages to put the market into a definite bear phase. The index is currently at 186.91 points, against 211.67 on May 29.

Following an initial fall after the election, stock analysts in London had rated Israeli shares a buy.

The market has since tried three times to claw back its losses, each time hitting a lower high in a sign that upward momentum was weakening.

Eli Nahum, head of trading at Zannex Securities, said even more worrying than falling prices is dwindling volume, averaging only 65 million shekels ($20.4 million) in the past months. "There is no money coming into the market," he said.

Interest rates are the key to the market's plight.

"The main story in the market is the yield on bonds. The stock market cannot compete with such high yields," said Ron Weisberg of IBI Investments.

Public redemptions from provident and mutual funds, key players in the stock market, continue unabated as investors turn to fixed-income instruments.

The stock market was dealt a severe blow in late June when the central bank hiked its key lending rate to commercial banks by 1.5 percentage points to an annual 17 per cent.

Short-term treasury bills are now yielding about 16.5 per cent. "With inflation expected to be 12 per cent this year, this is very attractive," said Doron Tsur, head of research at Sahar Securities. Inflation-linked bonds are yielding nearly five per cent, their highest levels since 1988.

Many believe political uncertainty generated by the victory of hardline Likud leader Benyamin Netanyahu has added to the market's problem, especially with respect to foreign investors.

"If Labour would have been in government everything would have looked totally different. The market is affected by uncertainty concerning the peace process," Mr. Tsur said.

Ron Lubasch, manager of Lehman Brothers' Israel office, said many foreign financial investors reduced their Israeli holdings before the elections and are now in a wait-and-see pattern.

Others believe the economy is still the dominant factor.

"Inflation, interest rates, a low dollar, a high deficit in the budget and current account, all are affecting the market," Mr. Nahum said. "There is a lot of scepticism concerning any economic measures taken by the new government."

The Likud-led government approved cutting 3.2 per cent from the 1997 budget, excluding debt servicing. These cuts have already met with opposition from Labour unions and criticism from parliament, which must still vote on the budget.

But the markets had been hoping for more immediate measures to deal with the 1996 budget as well as the current account deficit, expected to widen from last year's $4.1 billion.

Instead, the government said it would cut only 350 million shekels in 1996.

Mr. Rosenberg noted that while interest rates had pressured the market throughout the year, until now they had not slowed the economy. Now even the treasury admits economic growth will slow in the second half of 1996 and in 1997."The rules of the game have changed now and high interest rate are a double whammy. One, it doesn't make sense to invest in equities and two, they will cause economic growth to slow," Mr. Rosenberg said.

Indian firm plans $165 million fertiliser plant in UAE

MADRAS, India (R) — India's leading firm Southern Petrochemicals Industries Corp. (SPIC) plans to set up a $165 million fertiliser plant in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), officials have said.

The group also plans to part finance the expansion through a public share offering of global depositary receipts (GDRs).

"We plan to raise around $60 million through a GDR issue in September," R. Soundararajan, SPIC's finance director, told Reuters.

He said SPIC had established a wholly-owned subsidiary SPIC Fertiliser Company to manufacture fertiliser consisting of 1,200 tonnes a day of urea and its raw material ammonia in UAE's Jebel Ali free trade zone.

The plant, however, will not be new. To save costs, SPIC has dismantled a second-hand ammonia and urea complex which it bought from Sri Lanka and relocated it to the UAE, officials said.

"The officials there (in the UAE) have assured supply of feedstock (gas) and are offering tax concessions," Mr. Soundararajan said. The natural gas is to be sourced from UAE's gas fields.

But SPIC officials did not specify how much gas had been committed for the project or whether an agreement had been reached on a long-term gas purchase.

Most of the production is expected to be imported into India, one of the world's leading urea markets.

SPIC originally planned to relocate the plant to the north Indian state of Rajasthan, but a feedstock shortage in India prompted them to search beyond the country, Mr. Soundararajan said.

The plant was scheduled to be commissioned in 26 months, Mr. Soundararajan said, adding SPIC had spent about $30 million on the operation so far.

In addition to the GDR issue, SPIC's second offering in three years, the company plans to raise around $100 million through a consortium of banks in Europe and the United States, Mr. Soundararajan said.

SPIC had earlier raised $65 million in 1993 to modernise its Indian fertiliser plants.

The UAE plant will be SPIC's second overseas venture. It first ventured offshore in a tie-up with Jordan Phosphate Mines Company Ltd. and the Arab Investment Company S.A.A., a pan-Arab financial institution in Saudi Arabia.

That joint venture company, the Indo Jordan Chemicals Ltd, will produce 700 tonnes of phosphoric acid per day and is expected to be commissioned in December 1996.

Its entire production will be shipped to SPIC's fertiliser complex at Tuticorin on the southeast Indian coast from a dedicated storage terminal in the Red Sea Port of Aqaba.

Last week, SPIC reported a 44 per cent rise in turnover to 18.43 billion rupees ($524 million) for the year ended March 31, 1996. Profit after tax rose 20 per cent to 811.1 million rupees.

Mr. Soundararajan said fertilisers accounted for 65 per cent of SPIC's sales and about 60 per cent of its profits.

Analysts said SPIC's joint ventures were highly capital intensive and would result in cash flows only after two to three years. The bulk of SPIC's revenues come from commodity products.

But the company's investments in fertiliser joint ventures would improve its long-term competitiveness, analysts said.

Asia's airport-building frenzy not enough to meet demand

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Vast tracts of land are being bulldozed and seas pushed back as Asian countries build enormous new airports but much more needs to be done to meet the soaring demands of global travel in the 21st century.

With spending on 16 current Asian airport projects now exceeding $50 billion, experts who met recently in Singapore said hundreds of billions of dollars more may be needed to prevent jammed runways and congested terminals.

The region is forecast to account for 400 million passengers yearly or half the global total by 2010, from 122 million passengers or a third of world traffic in 1993.

The introduction of a new generation of huge aircraft called "Super Jumbos", perhaps within five years, also requires new or radically updated facilities.

"Despite the massive level of airport construction work, there is a grave danger that it will not be sufficient," said Thomas Windmuller, assistant director of the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG), a global industry alliance.

ATAG estimates that Asia-Pacific nations would have to spend $200 billion on airport projects by 2010 — but Mr. Windmuller said other studies put the bill at nearly $400 billion by 2005.

He warned that failure to improve aviation infrastructure could throttle economic growth and affect living standards of future generations.

By the end of this year, nearly half the existing international airports in the region would be unable to cope with demand at peak hours, he said.

Air space congestion caused by crowded airports is already costing airlines $100 million annually on southeast Asia-Europe links alone, said Pierre Jeanniot, director-general of the International Air Transport Association.

The world's most expensive airport projects are already found in the region, topped by Hong Kong's $20 billion Chek Lap Kok project.

Japan's new Kansai Airport built on reclaimed land off Osaka cost $15 billion . A second runway there would cost at least $1 billion more than the airport itself due to spiralling costs of deep-water reclamation, Mr. Windmuller said.

A third airport serving Tokyo could cost $23 to $35 billion , he said.

In China, some 20 new international airports are to open over the next 10 years. More than 40 other Chinese airports are to be upgraded over the next five years at a cost of at least $5 billion.

New international airports are also under construction or being planned in Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Seoul, Sydney and Bombay.

Major upgrading and expansion works are underway or on the drawing boards in other Indian cities, as well as in Jakarta, Manila, Singapore, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Vientiane.

Apart from airports, Asia must also upgrade roads and railways to handle heavier passenger and cargo traffic, an issue often neglected by planners.

Another looming problem is the coming of the "Super Jumbos" with an 800-seat airliner already envisaged.

Models capable of ferrying 500-600 passengers are now under development by Boeing Co. of the United States and its European rival Airbus Industrie.

A stretch model of the venerable Boeing B747, the B747-600, could be in service within five years.

Jean-Marie Chevallier, vice-president of French consultants Aeroports de Paris, said Super Jumbos "will require either building new terminals or radically updating existing terminals." Fong Kok Wai, engineering director of the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore, said tarmacs would have to be strengthened and facilities like air bridges, holding rooms and baggage handling equipment improved. Airport emergency services would also have to be reinforced to cope with the Super Jumbos.

BUSINESS

A review of news from the Arabic press

Cairo Amman Bank scores big

** JD 1.5 million in dividends are being distributed by the Cairo Amman Bank to its shareholders at a rate of 15 per cent that was approved by the general assembly last month.

Board Chairman Khalil Talhouni told the shareholders that the bank's achievements in 1995 were "excellent by all standards." Total assets jumped by 40.8 per cent from JD 426 million in 1994 to JD 600 million in 1995 and, as a result of various activities, the bank boosted pretax profit by 31 per cent to JD 6.4 million from JD 4.9 million posted in 1994.

Other figures show a 43 per cent growth in deposits which climbed from JD 360 million to JD 516 million at the end of 1995 and an increase in credit facilities from JD 186 million to JD 252 million in 1995 mainly as a result of lending expansion in the Palestinian territories. Mr. Talhouni pointed out that due to the good level of profit achieved, the bank was able to consolidate the allocation for bad debts to reach JD 14.6 million at the end of last year.

According to the bank's annual report, net earnings from interests and commissions rose by 30 per cent from JD 16.9 million in 1994 to JD 22 million in 1995. Earnings from foreign exchange trading jumped by 65 per cent, or JD 1.2 million, to reach JD 2 million. Another JD 2.24 million were earned from returns and dividends of the bank's portfolio of securities including government bonds. On the expenditure side, the administrative expenses increased from JD 11.8 million to JD 16.6 million but this rise was offset by the higher amount of income. The last point highlighted in the annual report was the rise in shareholders' equity from JD 18 million at the end of 1994 to JD 21.4 million at the end of last year.

Asked about the possibility of a merger with the Amman Bank for investment, Mr. Talhouni replied that there was no practical steps in that regard and that there was no direct contacts with that bank. However, he noted, the idea of a merger with other banks is on the cards and that discussions to that end were being conducted with the Central Bank (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq + Al Dustour).

REUTERS The Business of Information REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 14/07/96 19:05

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.5220	0.6448	1.2585	110.85	1.3693	1532.08	1.7088	5.1560
DE Mark	0.6570	-	0.4237	0.8268	72.81	0.8995	1005.96	1.1225	3.3880
GB Sterling	1.5509	1.5509	-	1.9497	172.00	2.1236	2376.10	2.6502	7.9964
CH Franc	0.7945	1.2090	0.5129	-	88.16	1.0875	1216.90	135.73	4.0952
JP Yen	0.0090	1.3724	0.5812	1.1348	-	1.2345	13.82	154.0800	4.6492
CA Dollar	0.7301	1.1110	0.4705	0.9185	1.2156	-	1119.80	1.2484	3.7693
IT Lira	0.0007	0.9932	0.4206	0.0821	1383.89	0.8934	-	11.15	3.3645
NL Guilder	0.5852	89.04	0.3771	72.63	6.482	0.8010	896.72	-	3.0164
FR Franc	0.1939	0.2951	0.1250	24.3990	21.47	0.2654	33.13	33.1300	-

Energy

Oils	Last	Previous
Brent	20.45	20.60
W. Texas	21.87	21.95
Bony	20.45	20.60
Dubai	18.17	17.94
UL Gas	204.00	205.00

Mid-East Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4061	0.17192	0.33569	29.5701
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.41465	0.17556	0.34279	30.1951
KW Dinar	3.3344	5.07872	2.15008	4.19815	369.822
BH Dinar	2.7776	4.2304	1.71075	3.34001	294.204
CY Pound	2.1269	3.2371	1.3708	2.6767	235.767

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	383.3	383.7
Silver (oz's)	5.12	5.14
Platinum (oz's)	389.75	390.75
AL (3 Months)	1473	1476
CU (3 Months)	1870	1875
Zinc (3 Months)	1020	1025
Lead (3 Months)	783	788
NI (3 Months)	7375	7400

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)

Period / Cncy	- 1 - Month	- 3 - Months	- 6 - Months	- 9 - Months	- 1 - Year
USD	5.25	5.53	5.75	5.90	6.09
GBP	5.66	5.67	5.81	5.81	5.90
JPY	0.40	0.46	0.56	0.77	1.00
DEM	3.18	3.25	3.31	3.34	3.39
FRF	3.65	3.73	3.82	3.94	4.08
CHF	2.31	2.56	2.58	2.68	2.75
ITL	8.79	8.77	8.50	8.37	8.34

Main Equity Indicies

Bourse	Index	Value	Low	High	Pr Cls	% Chng	Chng
NewYork	DOW JONES	5510.56	5471.41	5543.07	5520.54	-0.18	-9.98
Newyork	S&P 500	646.19	640.21	647.64	645.67	0.08	0.52
London	FT-SE 100	3728.3	3715.3	3745.8	3749	-0.55	-20.7
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	21656.45	21555.5	21887.1	21892.6	-1.08	-236.13
Paris	CAC 40	2050.55	2047.83	2068.31	2073.66	-1.11	-23.11
Frankfurt	DAX	2544.26	2544.16	2567.65	2575.54	-1.21	-31.28

Energy

Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	127.08	Spot
Cocoa ($/ton)	1433	Spot
Sugar ($/ton)	370	Spot
Wheat ($/ton)	231	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	25.5	Spot
Tea ($tg/kg)	168	Spot
Barley ($/bsh)	3.99	Spot
Rice ($/ton)	430	Spot

*** JOD Cross Rates**

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.0971	1.1026
DE Mark	0.4642	0.4665
CH Franc	0.5619	0.5647
FR Franc	0.1371	0.1378
JP Yen	0.6379	0.6411
NL Guilder	0.4135	0.4156
IT Lira	0.0462	0.0464

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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COUNTDOWN TO ATLANTA

No mercy for Australian drug cheats

ATLANTA (R) — Australian Olympic hopefuls were warned on Saturday they can expect no sympathy if they test positive for even the mildest of banned substances at the Atlanta Games.

Team officials admitted the recent drug furore involving swimmer Samantha Riley and her coach Scott Volkers had been "embarrassing" for Australian sport and are anxious to avoid similar incidents once the games start.

Riley received a severe caution from swimming's governing body FINA, and Volkers was initially banned for two years after the world champion recorded a positive test in Rio de Janeiro last year.

Volkers confessed to giving Riley a headache tablet from his wife's handbag, a decision he later described as "a moronic act", but is back coaching in Atlanta after his ban was reduced on appeal to seven months.

"It was an embarrassing moment for Australian sport," said Peter Montgomery, his country's deputy chef de mission.

"The whole incident demonstrates athletes must take responsibility for their own actions. We have stressed to them they must not take anything without consulting our medical team."

Team doctor Brian Sando has also hammered home the message that improved drug testing technology will weed out drug cheats who have previously escaped punishment.

"If any athletes have been using banned substances, there's a greater chance of them being detected at these games than any other games," said Sando.

"There are a couple of substances that aren't able to be detected at the moment...But it's only a matter of time before they are."

Sando singled out human growth hormone, which helps to build muscle and shed fat, and erythropoietin, which increases red cell mass and may be useful for people competing in endurance events.

But he suggested their use is "not widespread" and believes the benefits to be gained from them are not worth the risk attached.

Riley, a bronze medallist in Barcelona and world champion at both 100 and 200 metres breaststroke in Rome in 1994, was an outspoken anti-drugs campaigner before her positive test and is determined to restore her reputation. "I'm just disappointed if people have that opinion of me. I didn't want to be placed in the same category as people who are cheats.

"I don't know what all the other swimmers are taking or not taking. I can only worry about my own performance.

"This case has definitely raised a lot of awareness about what you can and can't take. If something good has come out of this, that's probably it." Volkers also declined to speculate on how many of Riley's rivals might be using illegal substances.

"Performance-enhancing drugs are a no-no — we want an even playing field," he said. "Sam's probably been tested 6-7 times this year....They just about live on our doorstep."

Convicts on Olympic duty

ATLANTA (AFP) — Prisoners are on the loose at an Olympic site, put to work to get the Atlanta beach venue ready in time to host the beach volleyball tournament.

"Some of the women here are a bit nervous about this," said an Olympic volunteer manning one of the entry gates to the venue while a team of five convicts worked on sprucing up the landscape

Other teams of prisoners from the nearby Clayton County Detention Centre were put to work inside the venue, but officials barred journalists from entering.

A Clayton County sheriff's department spokesman said the prison housed hundreds of convicts "of all kinds" from serious to petty offenders.

But only those who are a minimum security risk are working on the Olympic venue, said venue press chief Rich Bertolucci.

"These guys are all about to end their sentences and it would not make much sense for them to pull anything now," he said.

Security guards with hand guns patrol the convicts, who wear white jumpsuits with black piping down the pants.



Eddie Fuerte landscapes the grass with flowers in the shape of Olympic Rings in front of the Olympic Stadium July 13. Preparations continue for the Atlanta Olympics which begin on July 19 (Reuters photo)

Rosset to defend title in Atlanta

GSTAAD (R) — Swiss Olympic tennis champion Marc Rosset said Saturday he had decided to defend his title in Atlanta.

The world ranked number 16 had said last Wednesday he was having second thoughts about playing in Atlanta after losing in the opening round of the Swiss Open to German qualifier Oliver Gross.

But shortly after losing in the semifinal of the men's doubles with partner Cedric Pioline of France, Rosset told reporters: "I'm announcing to you that I've decided to participate in the Olympics.

"It wasn't an easy decision. I have thought a lot about it these last few days. But the Olympic Games are important and this could be my last chance to participate.

"I want to re-live that experience I had in Barcelona."

But like many other top ranked players, including Austria's Thomas Muster, Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Germany's Boris Becker, numbers two, four and five in the world rankings respectively, Rosset said that defending his gold medal was not as important as defending his position in the rankings.

Rosset said he had put together a programme that would allow him to defend both his medal and his place in the rankings.

"My programme will consist of the Olympics, (tournaments in) Cincinnati and Toronto and the U.S. Open which will allow me to defend my Olympic title and win enough points on the ATP," said Rosset.

Nigeria dangles cash rewards at Olympic athletes

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria's military government will reward athletes with cash if they win gold medals at the Atlanta Olympics.

An individual gold medalist will receive one million naira ($12,345), the chairman of the national sports development fund committee, Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu told athletes at a send-off dinner on Friday.

Nigeria's football team will share five million naira ($61,728) if they win gold while two million ($24,691) will be shared by members of any winning relay team.

Africa's most populous nation of 100 million people has never won a gold medal at the Olympics but hopes are high that they could surprise the world in football and the relay races.

The football team has been in the United States since last month preparing for the Games which start next week while the rest of the team departed Lagos for Atlanta Sunday.

Tour de France

'Tashkent Express' stuns breakaway group

TULLE, France (AFP) — Djamolodine Abdujaparov of Uzbekistan, the 'Tashkent Express', won the 186.5km 14th stage of the Tour de France from Besse to Tulle on Sunday — stunning four fellow breakaway riders.

Abdujaparov, winning his ninth Tour de France stage, beat home Mirco Gualdi of Italy, who was second, and Frenchman Laurent Madouas, who finished third.

Bjarne Riis of Denmark, who had earlier led a 60 km breakaway group, retained the yellow jersey, finishing in the peloton over four minutes behind Abdujaparov.

Abdujaparov, three times a green jersey winner for most points in the Tour, sped away from his four fellow escapees 2 km from the finish on a climb —surprisingly as he is primarily renowned for his sprinting abilities.

"I realised that I would not win in a sprint finish with them as it was on a climb, so I decided to attack before they could get organised," Abdujaparov explained.

Denmark's Bo Hamburger had been joined 60 km from the finish by Abdujaparov, Madouas, Gualdi and two other Frenchmen — Laurent Rous and Thierry Bourguignon — who was later dropped, after Hamburger had been on a 40 km lone breakaway from the village of Aubazines.

Hamburger, the group's nearest challenger to Riis, settled in behind his five companions and waited to make his break 3 km from the line on the steep climb to Tulle.

He must have been stunned to see Abdujaparov first get onto his wheel and then sweep past him swiftly.

Earlier in the stage, Riis had initiated a breakaway on the first climb of the day up to De La Croix-Morand, leaving a slumbering Miguel Indurain, the five-time winner, trailing in the peloton.

Riis was joined by most of his major rivals including Abraham Olano, the world road race champion, Yevgeny Berzin, the former yellow jersey wearer, and, as usual, his two faithful teammates Udo Bolts and Jan Ullrich.

The group built up over a 60-second gap on Indurain's group and the five-time winner was not helped when his brother Prudencio caused a massive spill on top of De La Croix-Morand, but allied with two other Spanish teams, Kelme and Once, they gradually regained the ground on the Riis group.

Riis, though, would have been satisfied with making Indurain and his Banesto team work so hard on a relatively light stage, but Manolo Saiz, the boss of Once, was quoted as saying on Saturday that Indurain could expect some outside help.

"Why shouldn't we help Miguel?" Saiz said.

Tour de France organisers had earlier received renewed threats of violence from an anonymous Basque organisation.

Egin, an independent Basque publication, published an anonymous statement threatening the security of the cyclists and the Tour de France caravan when it races in the Basque countryside on Wednesday and Thursday.

The statement said that action would be taken as there were several companies who supported the Tour who were anti-Basque.

Several Spanish and French companies have had their offices bombed in recent weeks, including the Renault showroom in Pamplona, where the 17th stage finishes on Wednesday.

The statement said: "Once the cyclists are in Basque country their security cannot be guaranteed."

ETA, the Basque terrorist organisation, sent a letter to the organisers in June threatening to bomb the Tour if they did not use a Basque announcer for the Pamplona stage. The organisers agreed to the demand.



The official 1996 Centennial Olympic Games mascot, "Izzy," is presented a Spanish flag by volunteer Lisa Marie at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport in preparation for the Spanish team arrival, July 13. The Spaniards have high hopes for Olympic medals after their strong showing in the 1992 Barcelona Summer Olympics (Reuters photo)

'British Olympic team gets protection against IRA'

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's team at the Atlanta Olympic Games is getting special protection for fear of an attack by the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Mail On Sunday reported.

The tabloid said U.S. police units were on the alert around the British training camp at Tallahassee in Florida on the orders of President Bill Clinton following the latest upsurge of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland.

The paper claimed British secret services feared an incident like the 1972 massacre of Israeli athletes by Palestinian extremists at the Munich Olympics.

Non-Games amusements crash out of favour

ATLANTA (R) — While Atlanta prepares to welcome the world for the Olympics, the city's top attractions are reeling from a sudden slowdown in their summer business, tourism officials said on Friday.

They said the anticipated invasion of two million Olympic visitors into an already congested city had frightened regulars away from museums, concerts and amusement parks.

And despite discount offers and two-for-one promotional campaigns, the summer of 1996 is shaping up to be a gloomy season for leisure businesses counting on the Olympics to pull in record crowds.

One of the region's biggest amusement parks, Six Flags Over Georgia, said its gates were 25 per cent down this year.

"People are going home and locking their doors and staying inside," said Six Flags marketing officer Terry Ward.

Promoters said tickets for concerts which in normal years would be sell-outs were still going begging.

New and one-off attractions, including a Coca-Cola theme park and the cultural Olympiad, were also depleting crowds at non-Olympic venues.

Atlanta's notorious traffic problems and the compact design of the Games — most venues are in a downtown hub — have prompted the city to mount a "get-out-of-town" campaign.

Downtown businesses are urging staff to work from home, or take a vacation during the Games, which open next Friday and run until August 4.

Comoros Islands send first team

MORONI (R) — The Comoros Islands sent their first team to the Olympic Games when six athletes left for Atlanta Sunday night.

The four men and two women from the Indian Ocean islands with a population of 330,000, will compete in the 100, 200, 400 and 800 metres track events.

Surfers create waves on Internet

ATLANTA (R) — Olympic sprint champion Linford Christie and U.S. basketball giant Shaquille O'Neal are among several big names arousing cyber-passions on the Internet in the countdown to the games.

The Olympic web-site allows fans to leave messages and varied advice for their favourite athletes who can access them at the popular "surf shack" inside the Games village.

Christie has received messages from as far afield as New Zealand, as well as one from compatriot Neal Cross urging the British sprinter to "stuff the Americans on their own turf".

O'Neal, the NBA's biggest attraction since Michael Jordan, also has a growing "postbag" including a request from an excitable American fan to "kick some international butt."

Organisers claim obscene or rude messages will be filtered out by specially-designed software, but admit mischievous surfers can still insult athletes in certain foreign languages.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH

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THREE THE HARD WAY

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠K5
♡AJ87
◇AK
♣AQ852

WEST
♠J8643
♡6
◇1098
♣J1096

EAST
♠972
♡K1093
◇76543
♣3

SOUTH
♠AQ10
♡Q542
◇QJ2
♣K74

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♣	Pass	2NT	Pass
6NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Ten of ◇

North-South dodged a bullet in the auction by managing to stay out of a heart slam which had to fail because of a distributional quirk. Then South showed superior technique in bringing home six no trump.

Had South responded one heart rather than two no trump, hardly the most descriptive action with a square hand and a weak four-card heart suit, six hearts would almost certainly have been the final contract. And North judged well to make the value bid of six no trump rather than introduce the four-card heart suit. With almost half the high cards in the short suits, North felt that no trump would play as well as any suit contract.

West led the ten of diamonds, and declarer could count ten tricks off the top. If either clubs or hearts split 3-2, or if the king of hearts were singleton, one of those suits would provide two additional tricks, and the slam would be home regardless of how many tricks were available in the other.

Declarer won the opening lead in dummy, cashed the ace of clubs and led a club to the king. When East discarded a diamond, South correctly refused to be tempted by the heart finesse. Instead, declarer led a heart to the ace and returned a low heart toward the queen — and the defenders were helpless. Since rising with the king would concede two more tricks in the suit, East was forced to play low.

When the queen of hearts held and West showed out, it was a simple matter for declarer to abandon the suit and revert to clubs. A club trick was conceded safely, and three tricks each in spades and diamonds, together with four club tricks and two hearts, brought declarer's total to 12.

TODAY AT

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Layla Elwi...in
Ya Dunya Ya Gharami
(Arabic)
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30
Toy Story
5:00 p.m

CINEMA CONCORD TEL: 677420
CONCORD "1"
Mel Gibson & Sophie Marceau in
BRAVEHEART
winner of 6 Academy Awards
Shows: 1:00, 5:00, 8:30
CONCORD "2"
BRAVEHEART
Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 9:30 (film duration-3 hours)

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play starts 8:30 p.m

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Arab Human Rights
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For reservation please call
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Seles leads United States into Fed Cup final

NAGOYA (R) — Monica Seles, playing for the first time for the United States in the Fed Cup, led her new country on Sunday into the final of the event with a devastating 6-0, 6-2 win over Japan's Kimiko Date.

Seles' win gave the United States an unbeatable 3-0 lead over Japan in the five-match series and set up a clash with either France or Spain in the final.

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On Saturday Seles beat Ai Sugiyama 6-2, 6-2 and was even more impressive against Date, who appeared sluggish and still not fully recovered after her Wimbledon heroics in reaching the semifinals there.

Date had lost the opening match of the event when she went down to Lindsay Davenport 6-2, 6-1 Saturday.

Seles showed no aftereffects of injuries to her leg and shoulder in blasting Date off the court in under an hour.

She was mobbed by U.S. coach Billie Jean King and the other U.S. players after her win and waved delightedly to the crowd.

In last year's Fed Cup final, the United States lost to Spain.

Belgium clinch Fed Cup berth

In Bloemfontein, South Africa, Belgium clinched their Federation Cup playoff 3-0 against South Africa here on Sunday when Sabine Appelmans capitalised on Amanda Coetzer's failing doublebackhand to beat her 6-3, 3-6, 6-0.

Appelmans Saturday downed South Africa's number two player, Mariaan De Swardt, 6-0, 3-6, 2-6, while Coetzer went down 2-6, 3-6 to Belgium's number two, Dominique Van Roost.

Sports

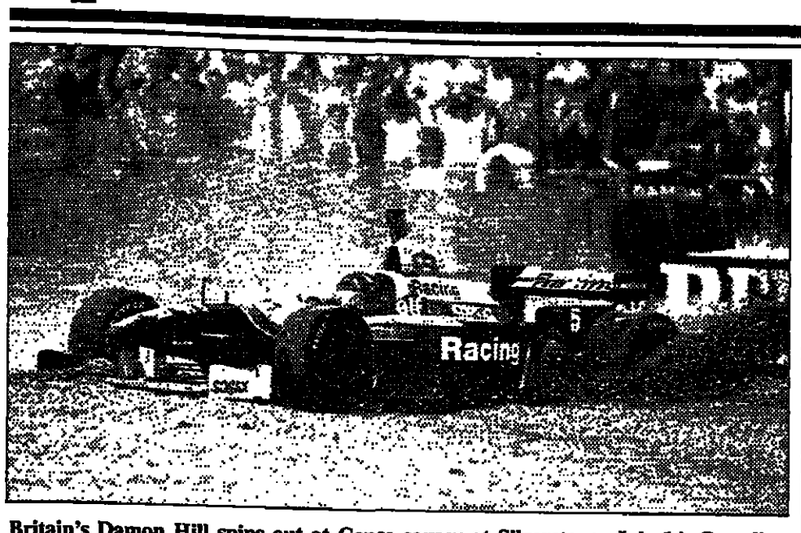


Britain's Damon Hill spins a
Jacques Villeneuve won the
(Reuters photo)

Villeneuv

SILVERSTONE (AFP) — J
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Sports



Britain's Damon Hill spins out at Copse corner at Silverstone July 14. Canadian Jacques Villeneuve won the British Grand Prix, his second Grand Prix victory (Reuters photo)

Villeneuve wins British GP

SILVERSTONE (AFP) — Jacques Villeneuve won the British Grand Prix here on Sunday after dominating from start to finish for his second victory this season.

Canada's Villeneuve, who beat out Gerhard Berger and Mika Hakkinen into second and third places, remained in second place in the driver's championship behind runaway leader Damon Hill, who spun off in lap 27.

Britain's Hill has 63 points to Villeneuve's 48 and their Williams-Renault team is way ahead in the constructors race.

Hill's superb qualifying performance to take pole position proved in vain as he was left at the start by his Canadian colleague, who had built up a lead of almost four seconds by the end of the third lap.

Benetton's Jean Alesi, who started fifth, and McLaren driver Hakkinen, fourth on the grid, both raced past the stuttering Hill to be Villeneuve's closest challengers.

But there was worse for Ferrari. World champion Michael Schumacher, despite passing Hill at the start to hold fourth place, was soon out of the race with gearbox trouble, while Eddie Irvine's engine blew meaning the northern Irishman did not finish his fourth race in a row.

It was an easy victory for Villeneuve in a largely low-key, uninspiring race compared to recent years.

Hill's race came to an end when he spun on to the gravel following a mistake on copse corner to the disappointment of most of the 90,000 fans.

He turned into the corner too early and could not prevent losing control.

Villeneuve pitted for the second time after 42 laps holding a resounding lead of more than 35 seconds.

And the smooth stop which saw him stationary for only 7.4 seconds meant he exited the pit lane still comfortably ahead of Hakkinen.

A puff of smoke from the back of Alesi's car on lap 44 spelt danger and he was soon passed by teammate Berger. The Frenchman toured into the pits and climbed out of the car as Benetton's reliability problem resurfaced.

Muster returns to Tour after 3-week break

STUTTGART (AFP) —World No. 2 Thomas Muster will return to the ATP Tour after a three-week injury break Monday as top seed at the one-million-dollar ATP Tour event here.

The Austrian hurt a thigh last month on the grass at the pre-Wimbledon event at Queen's Club, London, and was forced to miss the ensuing Grand Slam.

There was also some bad blood between the 28-year-old claycourt king and Wimbledon organisers, who left the second-best player in the world on a number seven seeding due to a lack of grass form.

As it happened, the formbook was tossed out anyway in the first-ever unseeded final at the All England Club, with Dutchman Richard Krajicek taking the crown.

Muster will be keen to defend his title in Stuttgart, which he won last year over Swede Jan Apell in a week marked by both searing heat and several violent thunderstorms which forced play to be doubled up at the weekend.

Injuries have depleted the field at the Weissenhof Club high on a hill overlooking the car-making city.

Boris Becker had been due to play, but his wrist injury suffered at Wimbledon ruled him out a fortnight ago.

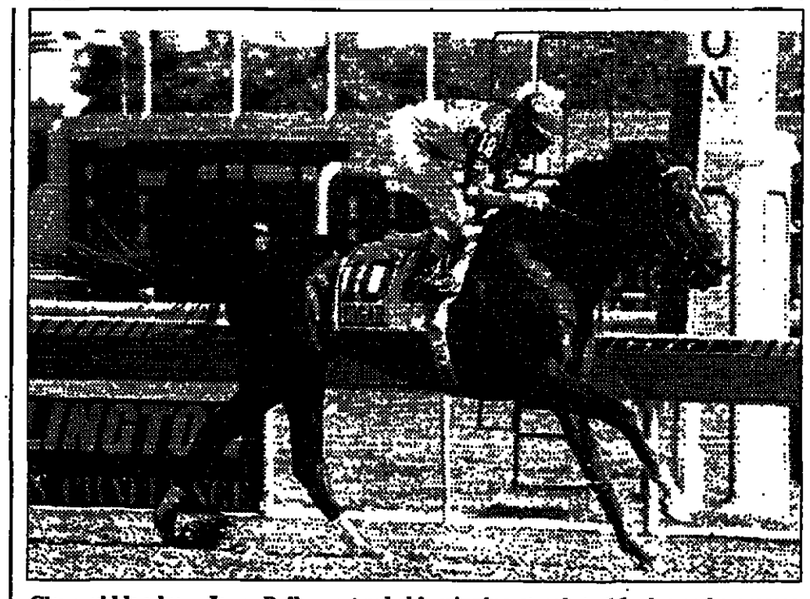
Organisers got bad news from world number seven Goran Ivanisevic. The Croatian, due to compete at the Atlanta Olympic event, is complaining of a shoulder problem and had to withdraw.

There are worries for the fitness of veteran and provisional fourth seed Stefan Edberg, victim of a groin strain which forced him to quit his Swedish Open doubles semi-final at the weekend after losing the singles against compatriot Magnus Gustafsson.

French Open champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov will be seeded second behind Muster. The 22-year-old Russian went out in an upset at the Swiss Open in the semifinals, losing to Spain's Alberto Costa.

Kafelnikov is making Stuttgart his last tournament for two weeks. During the Olympic period, he will rest and then travel to the U.S. for an assault on the hardcourts in hopes of improving his world number five ranking.

"I'm not going to Atlanta," said the Russian. "It would be too much. My goal is to become world number one and doing well on the Tour could help me reach that goal. I have a golden opportunity coming up."



Cigar, ridden by Jerry Bailey, extends his winning streak to 16 wins as he crosses the finish line all alone in the Citation Challenge at the Chicago-area Arlington International Racecourse, July 13. With the win, Cigar tied the record for consecutive wins, held by Citation (Reuters photo)

Cigar matches record with 16th straight victory

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Illinois (AFP) — Cigar sprinted down the stretch to history here Saturday, posting his record-tying 16th straight victory in the $750,000 Arlington Citation Challenge.

Starting from the outside 10th position, Cigar made his move from wide on the backstretch under Jerry Bailey, running down dramatic gold and taking the lead at the top of the stretch.

Bailey used a light whip and Cigar charged ahead, winning by three lengths. Eltish was a close third.

"There wasn't a brush that I could feel but we rode it tight," Bailey said. "Cigar had to work a little today and he ran a great stretch."

Cigar, the 1-5 favourite, tied the North American thoroughbred record for consecutive wins set by Citation in the 1940s. He can break the record in his next race, the Pacific Classic at Del Mar next month.

Major League Results

American League			
New York	3	Baltimore	2 (1st game)
New York	2	Baltimore	5 (2nd game)
California	6	Seattle	4
Boston	10	Detroit	5
Chicago	5	Kansas City	1
Toronto	15	Milwaukee	7
Texas	8	Oakland	1
Cleveland	19	Minnesota	11
National League			
St. Louis	10	Chicago	5
Atlanta	3	Florida	0
Cincinnati	3	Pittsburgh	1
Philadelphia	6	Montreal	2
Colorado	11	San Diego	6
San Francisco	7	Los Angeles	1

Karpov, Kasparov to meet next year

MOSCOW (AFP) — International Chess Federation (ICF) world champion Anatoly Karpov and his arch rival Garry Kasparov have agreed to a match next year, with prize money totalling at least two million dollars, Interfax reported Sunday.

With the benefit of 23 years of experience, Russian Karpov, 45, is an old hand at chess championships. He fought off young U.S. challenger Gata Kamsky in the ICF final battled out in June and early July in Elista, Russia.

But Karpov still dreams of exacting revenge against his fellow countryman Kasparov, 33, who is reigning Professional Chess Association world champion.

Eleven years ago, Kasparov put an end to Karpov's 10 years' domination in the world of chess when at the age of 22, he became the youngest world champion in the game's history.

Seles leads United States into Fed Cup final



Japan's Kimiko Date makes a double-hand return against Monica Seles of the United States in the second day's singles match of the Federation Cup semi-final held in Nagoya July 14 (Reuters photo)

NAGOYA (R) — Monica Seles, playing for the first time for the United States in the Fed Cup, led her new country on Sunday into the final of the event with a devastating 6-0, 6-2 win over Japan's Kimiko Date.

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Costa wins Swiss Open

GSTAAD (AFP) — Alberto Costa won an all-Spanish claycourt battle, beating Felix Mantilla 4-6, 7-6 (7-2), 6-1, 6-0 on Sunday to claim the title at the $ 560,000 Swiss Open.

Costa, 18th on the ATP Tour computer, a losing finalist at Monte Carlo to Thomas Muster in April, also beat Mantilla in the Monte Carlo quarters.

He earned $74,000 and 180 computer ranking points.

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Khobar bombers' getaway car found — Arab officials

MUSCAT (AFP) — Saudi investigators have found the white getaway car used by the bombers who carried out an attack on a military compound in the kingdom last month which killed 19 U.S. airmen, officials said at a meeting of Gulf leaders here Sunday.

The car, a Chevrolet Caprice, had been stolen several weeks' before the June 25 blast, said officials speaking on condition of anonymity. The vehicle had been repainted from its original grey to white, the officials added. They were unable to say when or where the car had been found.

The explosives-packed truck which destroyed part of the U.S. military compound at Al Khobar, near Dhahran, in eastern Saudi Arabia, had earlier been stolen from a building company.

A U.S. sergeant on duty at the base saw the two occupants of the truck jump aboard the white Chevrolet before driving away, the officials said.

Saudi authorities have so far to refused to give any details of the progress of their investigation into the bombing, although Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ibn Abdul Aziz said Thursday the attackers would be caught.

Riyadh has offered a reward of $2.6 million for information leading to the capture of the bombers, and Washington has offered a further $2 million.

Three days after the blast, which also injured around 500 people of various nationalities, U.S. investigators found the drive train of the exploded lorry which contained a serial number.

And the Saudi newspaper Al Shark Al Awsat, citing U.S. sources, said on July 6 that a fragment of a Swiss-made timing device used to set off the explosion had been recovered from the wreckage of the bombed building.

The U.S. administration has refrained from pointing the finger of blame at individual organisations or naming countries they believe could be behind the blast.

The bombing was the second against a U.S. target in the kingdom within the past year. In November a car bomb in Riyadh killed seven people, including five Americans.

Four Saudis were convicted of carrying out the Riyadh attack and were executed on May 30.

On Thursday the State Department warned the 40,000 Americans living in Saudi Arabia to be on their guard against further anti-American attacks in the kingdom.

Foreign ministers from eight Arab countries ended a two-day meeting in Muscat on Sunday which notably discussed the Middle East peace process and security in the region following the Al Khobar bombing.



SPIDERMAN CLIMBS JERUSALEM'S OLD CITY WALLS: An actor playing the comic strip character Spiderman climbs the ancient Old City walls above the Tower of David Citadel during a summer holiday children's show Sunday. In the background is the Citadel's courtyard and the new city including the King David Hotel (centre, rear) (Reuters photo)

Truce committee should calm situation in South Lebanon, Bweiz emphasises

BEIRUT (AFP) — The installation of a ceasefire monitoring committee in South Lebanon was aimed at easing tensions and not at disarming the anti-Israeli resistance, Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bweiz said Sunday.

"The committee cannot put an end to the activities of the resistance as it is not an international tribunal. It is a committee with the aim of reining in any escalation in South Lebanon" as well as protecting civilians, Mr. Bweiz told reporters.

He said Lebanon had approved the working structure of the ceasefire monitoring group, although he said no date had been set for its first meeting in Naqura, the headquarters of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

The five countries tasked with monitoring the truce in South Lebanon — France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the United States — reached agreement Friday in Washington on the terms of their mission.

The monitoring group was set up to check compliance to the April 26 ceasefire between Israel and Hizbollah guerrillas which ended a 17-day Israeli offensive against the Shiite fundamentalist group in South Lebanon.

The ceasefire calls on both sides to avoid targetting civilians.

Mr. Bweiz dismissed comments by Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu calling for a disarmament of the anti-Israeli resistance before the Jewish state considers withdrawing from the "security zone" it occupies in South Lebanon.

He insisted Lebanon was prepared to re-start peace talks with Israel along the principles laid out at the beginning of the peace process at the 1991 Madrid conference, notably the land-for-peace principle and U.N. resolution 425 calling or an unconditional Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon.

"It is wrong to say that peace is linked to security as security is a consequence of peace and you cannot put down peace as pre-condition when there is occupied land," said Mr. Bweiz.

Since his election in May polls Mr. Netanyahu has rejected the principle of trading land for peace with Arab neighbours, and has insisted peace with Arabs is dependent on Israel's security.

Mr. Bweiz said that "what Mr. Netanyahu is proposing is a new conception of peace, a return to the initial scenario, but we are not prepared to go backwards."

Weizman 'worried' by Arab hostility

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli President Ezer Weizman said Sunday he was "worried" by the tide of protest sweeping the Arab World against the policies of right-wing Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu.

"Statements from Arab countries in recent days, following the change in leadership in Israel, are worrying," Mr. Weizman told state radio.

Arab states warned the peace process was in jeopardy after Mr. Netanyahu reiterated his opposition to the principle of land-for-peace during a visit to the United States last week.

But Mr. Netanyahu said he was "not impressed and not excited" by Arab threats to reassess their policy towards Israel because of his hardline policies.

Mr. Weizman also said Sunday he was disappointed in the state of Israeli-Egyptian relations since their peace treaty in 1979.

"It is not the peace we are aiming for, and the two sides must address this subject," he said.

He said he hoped the "ties forged with Egypt and Jordan will be strengthened again soon."

Mr. Netanyahu, who was to return from Washington on Sunday, will visit Egypt on Thursday for his first trip to an Arab state since his May 29 election.

He will then visit Jordan, Israel's other partner in peace.

Israel often criticises Egypt for keeping their relations at the level of a "cold peace," and resents the fact that President Hosni Mubarak has only visited the Jewish state once, for the funeral of former Premier Yitzhak Rabin in November, since he came to power 15 years ago.

Mr. Weizman is a member of the Labour Party, though his views put him on the hawkish right wing of the party.

Nations 'pillaging, polluting' Somalia — official

CAIRO (AFP) — The world's great powers are exploiting the civil war in Somalia to "pillage and pollute" the country's natural resources, Somalia's representative to the Arab League said here on Sunday. "With the absence of a central government, Somalia is facing acts of pillage of its natural resources," Abdullah Hassan Mahmoud told journalists. "The fishing boats of the great powers operate in Somalia's territorial waters," he said, specifying "Indian, British, Japanese and Spanish" boats.

He said several boats, including one British, had dumped toxic wastes along the more than 3,000 kilometre shoreline of Somalia, adding: "The Somalia question has been forgotten by the world."

Moreover, "a quarter of the 20 million camels in Somalia, its main source of meat, have died due to an unknown disease, but not a single Arab country has given medical aid to put an end to this catastrophe," he said.

Lebanon's Christians face agonising choice

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's Christians, relieved by the acquittal of a Christian warlord for the bombing of a church in which 11 people died, face an agonising decision whether to boycott next month's parliamentary polls because of an election law that discriminates against them.

Anti-Syrian Christian opposition leaders have called on people to repeat the boycott of the 1992 elections, denouncing the law as illegal and the voting as "the most dangerous forgery aimed at erasing the Lebanese homeland."

The 1992 boycott was a massive protest by most Christians and many Muslims against the presence of 35,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon, Damascus' influence over the government and the perceived unfairness of election arrangements.

But the result of the boycott was a pro-Syrian parliament and there has been a growing realisation on the part of the Christian opposition that the boycott simply excluded them from national affairs.

The decision by Christian voters whether or not to take part in the polls will show their willingness to accept that their community's position was subordinated by the 1975-90 civil war and that the Syrians now play the dominant role in the country.

The acquittal on Saturday of Samir Geagea, who could have been sentenced to death if found guilty for the 1994 church bombing, relieved fears by the Christian minority that he might be the only civil war militia leader executed.

But newspapers pointed out that he still remains the only sectarian chief to face trial, while pro-Syrian chiefs said to have dirtied their hands in the war hold high office.

The court convicted four members of Mr. Geagea's militia for involvement in the bombing, which it said was ordered and planned by the Israelis.

Mr.Geagea is serving two life sentences for murder and the opposition political party he formed after the war from his Lebanese forces militia was outlawed following the church bombing.

A Beirut newspaper said on Sunday the election law imposed on Christian voters the same kind of political discrimination that Mr. Geagea has experienced.

"Christian candidates are practically at the mercy of Muslim voters with the contrary never being true," the French-language Beirut daily L'orient-le Jour said.

Christian opposition leaders in exile — ex-president Amin Gemayel and former army commander General Michel Aoun — joined right-wing National Liberal Party leader Dori Chamoun in issuing the boycott call a day after the election law was passed.

The government-backed law, approved last week by parliament, is tailor-made to ensure the election of Druze leader Walid Junblatt, an ally of the Syrian-backed government, at the expense of the Christians.

Voters were now torn between the temptation of repeating the 1992 boycott, which did not bring the desired results, and taking part in a vote with "extremely hypothetical advantages", L'orient-le Jour said.

Mount Lebanon, home to the Druze and the only region where Christians have an overwhelming majority, is the only one of Lebanon's five governorates that the law divides into smaller constituencies, creating districts with Druze majorities that can elect Mr. Junblatt.

The law has been widely denounced as unconstitutional and contrary to the Taif accord of 1989, which set out the political settlement which ended the civil war and ruled that all constituencies should be based on governorates.

Syria slams Israeli premier over reported remarks on Golan

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria on Sunday blasted Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu for reportedly saying that the starting point for peace talks with Damascus was each side's demand to keep the strategic Golan Heights.

The official Syrian newspaper Tishreen said Syria would never abandon the Golan, captured by Israel in the 1967 war, adding that talks could only be based on Israel's full withdrawal as it was agreed in the 1991 Arab-Israeli peace conference in Madrid.

"Netanyahu cannot put his rejected and condemned stand, which is keeping the Golan, as a base to start negotiations on the Syrian track because the Madrid conference had decided the base which was full withdrawal from the Golan in accordance with U.N. Resolution 242," it said.

"Syria will not abandon an inch of its land and occupation, no matter how long it lasts, will not lessen an atom of the (Syrian) rights to return the Golan on the way to achieve just and comprehensive peace," Tishreen said.

Mr. Netanyahu has been quoted by Israeli newspaper Maariv as telling the U.S. Senate Foreign Affairs Committee last week that the starting point for peace talks with Syria was each side's demand that it keep the strategic heights.

Tishreen also condemned the Likud leader's remark that Syria was the side that started the 1967 Middle East war.

"The Israeli allegation of self-defence is nothing but a lie which all incidents, documents and proofs could uncover," Tishreen said.

Syrian-Israeli peace talks, under the former Labour government, were deadlocked over Israel's withdrawal from the Golan, future ties and security arrangements.

Syria wanted full Israeli pullback and equal security arrangements. Israel wanted to see the depth of future ties before revealing the extent of its withdrawal.

Mr. Netanyahu, who won May elections on the basis of Israel's security concerns, rejects the land-for-peace principle.

Populist flurry marks Turkish premier Erbakan's first week

ISTANBAUL (R) — Turkey's Necmettin Erbakan has made a quick start in the face of a wary public and media to his term as the NATO-member country's first Islamist premier.

In his first active week in office, Mr. Erbakan has taken populist actions and made promises apparently aimed at allaying secularist scepticism while appeasing his own Welfare Party followers. He also looks to have taken hold of the reins in his alliance with the conservative True Path Party (DYP). "They have started very actively, very fast," commentator Sami Kohen told Reuters. "Past governments have, unfortunately, always begun their terms rather slowly and inactively."

Mr. Erbakan's governing coalition with DYP, led by U.S.-educated technocrat and former Premier Tansu Ciller, was confirmed in a vote of confidence in parliament on July 8.

Since then, Mr. Erbakan has given a 50 per cent wage rise to public employees and pensioners, taken steps to soothe tensions with Damascus and pledged to return home thousands of refugees from a 12-year-old Kurdish insurgency in the southeast.

The 69-year-old leader has also managed to fit in a victory trip to his constituency of Konya in Turkey's Islamist heartland and visits to two southeastern provinces to demonstrate his commitment to the Kurdish issue.

Welfare has initiated a parliamentary debate on how to best use and increase the state's resources. Finance Minister Abdul Latif Sener of Welfare gave a bleak picture of Turkey's economy and prescribed radical, Islamist remedies unlikely to have the approval of the pro-market DYP wing.

"The Welfare contingent, which has been burning up with the desire to govern for years, is going to be more active than True Path in using the state's resources. His first acts confirm this observation," wrote Derya Sazak in the liberal Milliyet daily.

Mr. Sener, who has promised to lower inflation running at 80 per cent annually despite the 125 trillion lira ($1.5 billion) budget burden of the pay rises and promised bonuses for security forces, mounted a tirade against "un-Islamic" interest rates.

France wants U.N. to clear arrest of war criminals

SARAJEVO (R) — France will ask the U.N. Security Council to give NATO peace troops in Bosnia a precise mandate to arrest indicted war criminals, Defence Minister Charles Millon said on Sunday.

"The arrest of war criminals does not come under the mandate that was given to IFOR (NATO force in Bosnia). For that reason France will use all available means to (get) the Security Council to deliberate without delay a procedure to be established so that war criminals are pursued and arrested," he said during a visit to the Bosnian capital Sarajevo.

Mr. Millon made clear France was dismayed that separatist Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and army commander General Ratko Mladic, both indicted for genocide by a U.N. tribunal, were still at large in part because NATO had not hunted them down on the grounds that this was not part of its peace mandate.

Western governments are concerned that Mr. Karadzic's continued hold on power in the half of Bosnia controlled by Serbs will undermine elections in September mandated by the 1995 Dayton peace treaty to help reunify the country.

"We hope the Security Council, the supreme authority on intervention in Bosnia, will assume its responsibility" Mr. Millon said during a visit to French NATO troops on France's national holiday.

COLUMN 8

Fast action by 9-year-old boy saves 1,000 lives

DHAKA (AFP) — A quick-witted nine-year-old boy saved the lives of 1,000 passengers on a train when he alerted the driver to a faulty track in south-eastern Bangladesh, newspapers said Sunday. The boy, Abul Khair, was playing near the rail track in Chandpur district Saturday when he noticed part of the track was missing, which could have derailed the train. Panic-stricken when he saw the advancing train, he rushed to his house and returned with a red cloth and succeeded in stopping the train, the reports said. The train continued its journey after the track was repaired.

SOS message left in bottle received — 35 years later

BAD WIESSEE, Germany (AFP) — A hiker who sought refuge from storms by ducking beneath some cliffs near the southern town of Bad Wiessee found some consolation in a bottle — in the form of a message left there 35 years ago by another hiker in distress. The author of the message, Georg Hoss of Bad Wiessee, had narrowly escaped death by ducking below the cliff during a landslide. There, he drank a beer, and after slipping a note with his name and address in the bottle, continued his route. Jochen Schwarz said Tuesday that he had met the hiker, who is now 85. Mr. Hoss was "delighted" that his message had reached a receiver, Mr. Schwarz said.

Fossil of prehistoric horse found in Peru

LIMA, Peru (R) — A group of French scientists said Thursday they had found the fossil of a prehistoric horse that roamed the Peruvian coast up to 23,000 years ago. The scientists discovered the fossil as they scoured the coastal dessert around Trujillo, 570 kilometres north of Lima, while searching for clues about the region's first human inhabitants. The group has also discovered incomplete fossils of an elephant-like mastodont, a fox and a deer, which lived in the area 4,000 years before the first humans, said anthropologist Claude Chaucat. "According to our investigations there seems to be no connection between the animals and humans," the scientist said. While Peru's coastal strip is now desert, in prehistoric times, it is thought to have been covered in vegetation, he added.

Japanese video-mad teenagers are 'not sleeping enough'

TOKYO (AFP) — The majority of Japanese high school students complain they're not getting enough sleep — but they spend more than one hour each day on video games, an Education Ministry survey said Sunday. Senior high school students, aged 15-18, had an average six hours and 43 minutes of sleep a night, with 66 per cent of girls and 61 per cent of boys saying they are not getting enough sleep, the survey said. Most of them gave no specific reasons for their lack of sleep, saying they just "stay up late," it said. The nationwide survey was based on questionnaires filled in by some 26,500 children aged between six and 18. It also showed children of all ages spent an average of more than one hour each day playing video games, with children of 10-12 devoting the most time — 74 minutes.